

German Strategy
and Opinion
After the Wall
1990 – 1993

Deutsche Strategie
und Öffentliche
Meinung nach
dem Fall der Mauer
1990 – 1993

Ronald D. Asmus

RAND

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PREFACE

This report analyzes the results of a series of public opinion polls conducted for RAND since German unification and designed to identify longer-term public opinion trends on emerging national security issues in a unified Germany. It focuses on the results of the most recent poll conducted in the fall of 1993 before the January 1994 NATO summit.

This report also draws on analyses of the survey work conducted in previous years and sponsored by Project AIR FORCE to present a composite picture of trends in German public opinion on national security and alliance issues since German unification. It also integrates the results of interviews with a wide ranging set of German opinion-makers from political parties, public opinion experts, and senior officials in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense on how to assess the implications of these findings. It should be of interest to both American and German policymakers interested in the future of the U.S.-German relationship and the trans-Atlantic Alliance.

This research was supported by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. RAND also contributed its own funds as well as concept-formulation and research-support monies from the International Policy Department and three federally funded research and development centers: Project AIR FORCE, sponsored by the U.S. Air Force; the Arroyo Center, sponsored by the U.S. Army; and the National Defense Research Institute, sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff.

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SUMMARY

In the fall of 1990, RAND initiated a multiyear survey research effort exploring how trends in German public opinion could reshape German strategic thinking over the next decade. The purpose of these studies was to address a simple question: How will Germans define their post-Cold War strategic interests?

To help answer this question, RAND designed a set of questionnaires focusing on those issues of special interest for the future U.S.-German strategic relationship. A premium was placed on identifying underlying trends and "building block" issues that might help convey where Germany was headed as a new strategic actor in Europe over the next decade in a radically changed strategic environment.

These studies provide snapshots into how Germany's strategic mindset has been reshaped by events taking place on and beyond its immediate borders during the past four years. Taken together, they provide some insights into the overall direction in which German strategic thinking is headed. The four years during which these surveys were conducted have witnessed a remarkable series of events—German unification, the Persian Gulf War, the unraveling of the USSR, war in the Balkans, attempted coups in Russia, and a growing debate over the future of the Atlantic Alliance and whether NATO should expand to the East or assume a greater role in resolving conflicts on Europe's periphery beyond its current borders.

Germany's strategic orientation remains unequivocally pro-Western. There remains a considerable reservoir of sympathy in Germany for the United States. Germans like Americans, consider themselves to be pro-American, and expect the United States to remain a key ally in

the future. Despite criticism in the German and European media over the low priority that U.S.-European relations received during the Clinton Administration's first year, the RAND surveys have found that the German public supports the U.S. President's attempts to address American domestic problems.

In 1993, for example, 55 percent of Germans polled believed the United States must resolve its domestic problems if it is to remain a reliable partner for Germany in the future. Only 8 percent feared that U.S.-European relations would suffer as a result of the United States turning inward. Similarly, although German commentators have expressed concern over Clinton's lack of foreign policy experience, the 1993 survey found that 61 percent of German respondents expressed the hope that a new administration in Washington would lead to new ideas and concepts regarding the future American international role.

Although public support in Germany for NATO fell in the late 1980s, it has actually *risen* in both parts of Germany since unification and the end of the Cold War. In 1993, nearly three out of four West Germans (72 percent) believed that NATO remains essential for German security. In the East, support for NATO has climbed from 35 percent in 1991 to 52 percent. Belief in NATO has become so widespread that even a majority (58 percent) of voters for the Green Party now consider NATO essential for German security.

Support for the American military presence, however, is less solid—reflecting the lack of a clear and understood rationale for that presence following the collapse of communism and the unraveling of the former USSR. Since 1990, RAND has asked a question designed to test whether the German public sees a link between the American and Russian military presence, and whether German support for the U.S. military presence might diminish following the completion of the withdrawal of the troops of the former USSR—currently scheduled for the summer of 1994. With the exception of 1992, a slim majority of Germans have supported a withdrawal of the American military presence. Other questions asked by RAND, the U.S. Information Agency, and German polling firms in recent years have produced more positive results, however.

The American military is unlikely to be thrown out of Germany in a wave of public protest. Two patterns are nevertheless clear. In the East, there is a clear rejection of an American military presence; in West Germany, public opinion results vary considerably depending upon the question's wording and the year. Yet, not insignificant numbers of West Germans, too, prefer either additional reductions or a withdrawal of American troops. The danger for the alliance lies in the interaction between American and German politics, the lack of a clear rationale for sustaining the U.S. military presence, and the step-by-step erosion of a component of the U.S.-German relationship that everyone insists is crucial for European stability.

The issue of the U.S. military presence must also be seen in the context of the new debate over NATO's future. The key question is no longer whether or not the German public supports NATO, but rather what it expects NATO to actually do in the future, because German public support for NATO and the American military presence is clearly contingent upon that presence contributing, and being seen as contributing, to German national security interests. Should NATO's purpose remain limited to the traditional mission of territorial defense, in effect limiting its mission to the increasingly unlikely event of a revanchist Russia again threatening Western Europe? Or should it expand to include new members in Eastern Europe, or go "out of area" and assume new missions in response to the new conflicts and instability emerging on Europe's periphery?

In 1992, RAND therefore posed a question testing the German public's response to the idea of NATO assuming a variety of possible new missions. In 1993, majorities supported NATO involvement in new crises on Europe's periphery (74 percent), a crisis management role in Eastern and Southeastern Europe (58 percent), and the extension of security guarantees if and when East European countries join the European Union (EU) (63 percent). One out of two Germans (49 percent) supported extending NATO membership to select East European countries.

Germans also support a strong EU as a stepping stone to a new partnership between the United States and Europe. Perhaps the most striking result has been the clear evidence of the German public's desire for an ongoing and more balanced partnership between the United States and Europe. Asked how they view a number of differ-

ing “visions” for the EU, 90 percent favored the idea of a “partnership among equals,” a phrase coined by Defense Minister Volker Ruehe, with 81 percent backing the notion of an expanded alliance with the United States.

Germans also remain committed to Europe and European integration. Support for a further deepening of integration as envisioned in the Maastricht Treaty remains weak, however. Less than a majority support either political or monetary union, with support for the latter steadily dropping over the last three years. If one considers the three core elements of the Maastricht Treaty—political union, economic and monetary union, and a common foreign policy—there is majority support only for the latter. Only 10 percent of the public believes that the EU countries have common interests. Seven out of ten Germans (71 percent) believe that a unified Germany should have more influence in the European Union.

Germans are becoming more aware of their interests in and the future risks to German security that could emanate from crises originating beyond their borders—e.g., Eastern Europe, Russia, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. A shift in German priorities is evident. Not only do Germans single out Eastern Europe as one of the top foreign policy issues facing the country, but Eastern Europe and Russia top the list of Germany’s “vital interests.” Moreover, when asked to identify the greatest “critical threats” to Germany’s “vital interests” in the years ahead, those threats of greatest concern to the German public clearly lie in the East—another Chernobyl (78 percent), the spread of nationalism (69 percent), nuclear proliferation (63 percent), emigration (43 percent), and ethnic and regional conflict (42 percent).

This growing public recognition of Germany’s interest in the East might be termed Germany’s new “Zwang nach Osten.” It does not reflect any aggressive German intent, but rather a defensive and pragmatic realization that Germany is most vulnerable to the rise of nationalism and instability on its eastern borders. Although Germany was, in many ways, the greatest beneficiary of the collapse of communism, it could also end up being one of the greatest losers in the post-Cold War world should new instability arise in the East and spread to the West. This translates into German support for the expansion of the EU as well as of NATO.

At the same time, the RAND surveys also have repeatedly documented what has been termed Germany's "culture of reticence" in military affairs—i.e., reluctance to think in terms of using military power to achieve political goals. The issue of the participation of German armed forces in so-called "out of area" operations has not only been an issue of conflicting constitutional interpretation; past RAND surveys have also confirmed the existence of a political and psychological hurdle in the German public when contemplating possible Bundeswehr participation in operations other than the defense of Germany.

As a result, although a majority of Germans support NATO assuming new missions and responsibilities for dealing with potential crises in and around Europe, less than a majority support the Bundeswehr participating in those new missions. For example, whereas half (53 percent) back German Bundeswehr participation in peacekeeping operations, only one-quarter (28 percent) favor German military participation in NATO operations outside of Germany, and only one out of five (18 percent) support German forces participating in UN-sponsored operations such as Desert Storm. Support for German armed forces participating in "out of area" operations under NATO auspices is higher, albeit still less than a majority.

Three years after German unification, major differences persist in West and East German attitudes on a variety of issues. Nowhere is this more clear than with regard to both the United States and security policy issues. There are some signs of movement in East German attitudes, above all among the younger generations. On security policy issues, what is most striking is the large and persistent East German majority that opposed anything connected with the military—be it a U.S. troop presence, the principle of military intervention in defense of human rights, or a possible role for the Bundeswehr—whether under the auspices of the UN or NATO. The consistent East German majority opposed to these aspects of security policy is all the more striking in light of the fact that West German views are often split right down the middle—with the East German factor, therefore, tipping the scales in terms of overall German majority views.

In some ways Germany is starting to mature into the kind of strong partner in Europe that American policy has always called for. Yet, it

remains to be seen how Bonn will ultimately resolve the contradiction of the German public viewing their country as the power best equipped to assume a leadership role in Europe, supporting in principle military intervention and the alliance dealing with new crises, yet shying away from any German military involvement that would logically flow from such thinking. Germany's "culture of reticence" runs the risk of becoming a major stumbling block, for example, in attempts to revitalize and reform the Atlantic Alliance—for it is clear that NATO will not assume new responsibilities unless Germany is willing and able to bear its share of them.

Looking back over the results of the RAND surveys since 1990, one can see elements both of the passing of the old Cold War consensus in Germany and of a possible new consensus. This new consensus, however, has not yet come together—in large part because of the lack of leadership and consensus in the political class. Despite repeated calls for a new national debate on foreign and security policy since German unification and the Gulf War—the kind of debate that could clarify German national interests and priorities and help forge a new national consensus—the political class has by and large shied away from such a debate. Although "public opinion" is often cited as a major reason why Germany cannot confront these issues, what is most striking is how commonsensically German public opinion has evolved on many of these issues explored. In some cases, it may even be ahead of the political class.

Although debate over Germany's national interests remains largely taboo for fear that it would send the wrong political signals, such a debate may be the only way for the country to reach closure around a new understanding of German national priorities and strategy. Germany's ability—or lack thereof—to reach closure on these issues will determine whether German policy can successfully meet the new challenges of the post-Cold War era. Germany can either be a catalyst for positive change, the kind of change that will lead to a more stable Europe, or it can end up blocking efforts to revitalize both the EU and the Atlantic Alliance.

This is especially true following the NATO summit in January 1994. Although Germany has in many ways been out front in calling for NATO reform and an expanded program of political outreach to the East, German policy will lack credibility until it is clear that Bonn can

and will also assume its share of new missions and responsibilities. Unless Germany overcomes its "culture of reticence," NATO will be unable to retool itself for the new challenges of the post-Cold War era. What is needed to forge a new consensus is political leadership, a clear sense of German national interests and priorities, and a strategy to pursue those interests in conjunction with Germany's allies.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Nach dem Fall des Eisernen Vorhangs, der den Deutschen die Wiedervereinigung brachte, ist Deutschland unversehens wieder in seine alte Mittellage in Europa gerückt und damit wiederum zu einem entscheidenden Faktor für die Stabilität in diesem Europa geworden. Vor diesem Hintergrund startete RAND eine kontinuierliche angelegte Studie, um zu beobachten, wie sich die öffentliche Meinung und das strategische Denken der Deutschen auf diese neue Situation innerhalb nächster Dekade einrichten würde.

Zu diesem Zweck entwickelte RAND eine Reihe von Erhebungsinstrumenten die in erster Linie abzielten, die Frage der künftigen strategischen Partnerschaft zwischen den USA und Deutschland zu beleuchten. Insbesondere sollten grundlegende Bausteine und Trends identifiziert werden, wie sich Deutschland als neuer strategischer Akteur in Europa über die nächste Dekade unter völlig veränderten strategischen Bedingungen entwickeln werde.

Diese Studien bilden jeweils Momentaufnahmen zum Veränderungsprozess strategischer Denkmuster in Deutschland, ausgelöst durch aktuelle Entwicklungen im unmittelbaren oder weiteren Umfeld. In dem Erhebungszeitraum von vier Jahren lagen eine Reihe bemerkenswerter Ereignisse: die Vereinigung Deutschlands, der Golfkrieg, die Auflösung der UdSSR, der Krieg in Ex-Jugoslawien, Umsturzversuche in Russland sowie eine zunehmende Debatte über die Zukunft der Atlantischen Allianz und darüber, ob die NATO sich nach Osten ausweiten oder eine grössere Rolle in der Konfliktlösung an Europas Peripherie, also ausserhalb der gegenwärtigen Grenzen spielen sollte. Die Untersuchungsergebnisse liefern einen Einblick,

wie sich diese Entwicklungen auf das strategische Denken der Deutschen auswirkten.

Strategisch bleibt Deutschland eindeutig pro-westlich orientiert. In Deutschland bleibt auch ein bemerkenswertes Reservoir an Sympathien für die Vereinigten Staaten. Die Deutschen mögen die Amerikaner, bezeichnen sich selbst als pro-amerikanisch und erwarten, dass die Vereinigten Staaten auch künftig ein zentraler Verbündeter bleiben wird. Ungeachtet der Kritik in den deutschen und europäischen Medien an der Vernachlässigung der US-europäischen Beziehungen im ersten Jahr der Clinton Administration verdeutlichen die RAND-Ergebnisse, dass die deutsche Öffentlichkeit die Bemühungen des US-Präsidenten gut heisst, sich verstärkt den inneramerikanischen Problemen zuzuwenden.

1993 glaubten beispielsweise mehr als die Hälfte der Deutschen (55 Prozent), dass die Vereinigten Staaten zuerst ihre eigenen Probleme lösen müssten, um weiterhin ein verlässlicher Partner für Deutschland zu bleiben. Nicht einmal jeder zehnte befürchtete, dass die US-europäischen Beziehungen darunter leiden könnten, dass sich die Vereinigten Staaten mehr sich selbst zuwenden. Und ungeachtet der Befürchtungen deutscher Kommentatoren, Clinton ermangle es an aussenpolitischen Erfahrungen, zeigte die 93-er Erhebung, dass sechs von zehn Deutschen (61 Prozent) mit der neuen US-Regierung die Hoffnung auf neue Ideen und Konzepte im Hinblick auf die künftige internationale Rolle Amerikas verbanden.

Während im Laufe der achtziger Jahre die öffentliche Unterstützung in Deutschland für die NATO kontinuierlich abnahm, ist sie seit der Vereinigung und seit dem Ende des kalten Krieges im Westen wie im Osten der Bundesrepublik wieder spürbar gestiegen. 1993 glaubten nahezu drei Viertel aller Westdeutschen (72 Prozent), dass die NATO für die Sicherheit Deutschlands unverzichtbar sei. Im Osten Deutschlands nahm die Zustimmung zur NATO zwischen 1991 und 1993 von 35 Prozent auf 52 Prozent zu. Das Vertrauen in die NATO ist heute so tief verankert, dass erstmals sogar eine Mehrheit der Wähler der Grünen (58 Prozent) die NATO heute für die Sicherheit Deutschlands unverzichtbar hält.

Die Unterstützung für die amerikanische Militärpräsenz ist nicht gleichermassen fraglos. Darin spiegelt sich ein Mangel an einer

klaren und verständlichen Begründung für diese Präsenz nach dem Zusammenbruch des Kommunismus und der Auflösung der früheren UdSSR wider. Seit 1990 legt RAND deshalb die Frage vor, ob die deutsche Öffentlichkeit zwischen der amerikanischen und russischen Truppenpräsenz einen Zusammenhang sieht und ob die deutsche Unterstützung der früheren UdSSR—die bis zum Sommer 1994 abgeschlossen sein soll—abnimmt. Mit Ausnahme von 1992 sprach sich eine knappe Mehrheit der Deutschen für eine Verringerung der amerikanischen Truppenpräsenz aus. Andere von RAND, USIA und deutschen Umfrageinstituten verwendete Erhebungsinstrumente erbrachten allerdings zeitgleich positivere Ergebnisse.

Die amerikanischen Truppen werden sicherlich nicht aufgrund öffentlicher Proteste nach dem Muster "Ami go home" aus Deutschland herausgeworfen, es zeichnen sich jedoch zwei Tendenzen ab. In Ostdeutschland herrscht eine klare Ablehnung amerikanischer Militärpräsenz vor. In Westdeutschland sind dagegen erhebliche Schwankungen im Meinungsbild festzustellen, je nach dem wie die Frageformulierung lautet und zu welchem Zeitpunkt die Frage gestellt wurde. Allerdings präferiert auch ein nennenswerter Anteil der westdeutschen Bevölkerung entweder eine weitere Reduktion oder einen völligen Abzug amerikanischer Truppen. Die Gefahr für die Allianz besteht vor allem darin, dass das Fehlen einer klaren Begründung für die Aufrechterhaltung amerikanischer Truppenpräsenz in Deutschland beiderseits zu einer schleichenden Erosion der Legitimierungsgrundlagen für diese Präsenz führt—eine Präsenz, die nach wie vor eine der zentralen Voraussetzungen für ein stabiles Europa bildet.

Die Frage amerikanischer Militärpräsenz muss auch im Zusammenhang mit der neuen Debatte über die Zukunft der NATO gesehen werden. Die Schlüsselfrage lautet nicht mehr, ob die deutsche Öffentlichkeit die NATO unterstützt oder nicht, entscheidend ist vielmehr, was von der NATO in Zukunft von deutscher Seite konkret erwartet wird. Für die Unterstützung der NATO und amerikanischer Truppenpräsenz in der deutschen Bevölkerung wird ausschlaggebend sein, dass diese Präsenz zum Schutz nationaler Sicherheitsinteressen beiträgt und dass dies auch die deutsche Öffentlichkeit so sieht. Zu klären bleibt, ob die Begründung der NATO auf die traditionelle Mission der Territorialverteidigung beschränkt

bleiben sollte—und damit letztendlich auf den zunehmend unwahrscheinlichen Fall, dass ein revanchistisches Russland wiederum Westeuropa bedroht—oder ob die NATO um Neumitglieder aus Osteuropa erweitert bzw. auf "Out-of-Area" Einsätze ausgedehnt werden und damit Neuverpflichtungen eingehen sollte, als Antwort auf neue Konflikte und Instabilitäten, die sich am Rande Europa entwickeln?

RAND stellte deshalb schon 1992 eine Frage, um die Akzeptanz der deutschen Öffentlichkeit für solche neuen Aufgaben zu testen. 1993 fand ein Engagement der NATO in neuen Krisengebieten am Rande Europas ebenso mehrheitliche Unterstützung (74 Prozent) wie ein aktives Krisenmanagement in Ost- und Südosteuropa (58 Prozent) sowie eine Ausweitung der Sicherheitsgarantien, wenn und sobald osteuropäische Länder der EU beitreten (63%). Jeder zweite Deutsche (49 Prozent) unterstützt diese Ausweitung der NATO-Mitgliedschaft auf ausgewählte osteuropäische Staaten.

Die Deutschen sprechen sich auch für eine starke EU als Basis für eine neue Partnerschaft zwischen den USA und Europa aus. Das vielleicht überraschendste Ergebnis war der deutlich sichtbare Wunsch der deutschen Öffentlichkeit nach einer fortdauernden und ausgeglicheneren Partnerschaft zwischen den Vereinigten Staaten und Europa. Bei einer Auswahl unterschiedlicher "Visionen" für die künftige EU favorisierten neun von zehn Deutschen (90 Prozent) eine "Partnerschaft unter Gleichen"—eine Bezeichnung, die vom Verteidigungsminister Volker Rühe geprägt wurde—und acht von zehn (81%) wünschen sich eine "Stärkung der EG als Basis für eine weitergehende Allianz zwischen Europa und den USA."

Die Deutschen fühlen sich Europa und der europäischen Integration weiterhin eng verpflichtet. Allerdings bleibt die Unterstützung für eine vertiefende Integration, wie sie der Maastrichtvertrag vorsieht, eher schwach. Weder die politische noch die Währungsunion findet einer mehrheitliche Zustimmung, wobei die Unterstützung für die Währungsunion in den letzten drei Jahren sogar kontinuierlich abnahm. Betrachtet man die drei Kernelemente des Maastrichtvertrages—die politische Union, die ökonomische und Währungsunion und die gemeinsame Aussenpolitik—so findet nur die letztere eine mehrheitliche Unterstützung in der deutschen Bevölkerung. Ganze 10 Prozent sind davon überzeugt, dass die EU-Länder überwiegend

gemeinsame Interessen haben. Sieben von zehn Deutschen (71 prozent) plädieren dafür, dass ein vereintes Deutschland einen grösseren Einfluss innerhalb der europäischen Union besitzen sollte.

Die Deutschen werden sich immer stärker ihrer Interessen und künftigen Sicherheitsrisiken bewusst, die aus den Krisen ausserhalb der eigenen Grenzen, z.B. Osteuropa, Russland, am Mittelmeer oder Nahost erwachsen. Offenbar findet ein Wandel in den Prioritäten Deutschlands statt. Osteuropa wird von den Deutschen nicht nur als eines der wichtigsten aussenpolitischen Felder angesehen, mit dem sich das Land konfrontiert sieht, Osteuropa und Russland werden auch an erster Stelle genannt, wenn es um die vitalen Interessen Deutschlands geht. Auf die Frage nach den zentralen Bedrohungen für Deutschlands vitale Interessen werden an erster Stelle solche angeführt, die vom Osten ausgehen: ein zweites Tschernobyl (78 prozent), die Verbreitung eines neuen Nationalismus (69%), die Verbreitung von Atomwaffen (63 prozent), Einwanderungsströme (43%) und ethische und regionale Konflikte (42 prozent).

Die zunehmende Erkenntnis, dass Deutschlands Interessen vorrangig im Osten liegen, könnte man als Deutschlands neuen "Zwang nach Osten" bezeichnen. Dies impliziert keinerlei aggressive Absichten, sondern ist Ausdruck der pragmatischen Einsicht, dass die wahrgenommenen Bedrohungen aus dem Osten in erster Linie Deutschland betreffen würden. Deutschland hat bislang von dem Zusammenbruch des Kommunismus am meisten profitiert, es könnte letztlich aber als der grosse Verlierer in der Ära nach dem kalten Krieg dastehen, sollten sich neue Unstabilitäten im Osten ergeben und nach Westen ausbreiten. Dies führt unmittelbar dazu, dass Deutschland sowohl eine Ausweitung der EU als auch der NATO befürwortet.

Ein weiteres durch die RAND-Studien wiederholt bestätigtes Ergebnis ist ein Phänomen, dass als Deutschlands "Kultur der Zurückhaltung" in militärischer Hinsicht bezeichnet werden kann: die Ablehnung jeglicher Anwendung von militärischer Gewalt, um politische Ziele zu erreichen. Die unterschiedlichen Positionen zur Beteiligung deutscher Streitkräfte an den sogenannten "Out-of-Area" Operationen sind nicht nur in den unterschiedlichen verfassungsrechtlichen Ausdeutungen begründet. In den RAND-Studien finden sich vielfach auch Belege für politische und psychologische

Barrieren im öffentlichen Bewusstsein, wenn es um eine mögliche Beteiligung der Bundeswehr an Operationen geht, die nicht unmittelbar der Verteidigung Deutschlands dienen. Und obwohl sich eine Mehrheit der Deutschen im Zusammenhang mit potentiellen Krisen in und um Europa für eine Ausweitung der Ziele und der Verantwortlichkeit der NATO ausspricht, befürwortet nur eine Minderheit eine Beteiligung der Bundeswehr an derartigen Einsätzen. So bejaht die Hälfte der Deutschen (53 Prozent) eine Beteiligung der Bundeswehr an friedenserhaltenden Operationen, aber nur ein Viertel (28 Prozent) akzeptiert eine militärische Beteiligung Deutschlands an NATO-Operationen ausserhalb Deutschlands und nur jeder fünfte (18 Prozent) unterstützt die Beteiligung deutscher Streitkräfte an von der UNO beschlossenen Einsätzen wie den Golfkrieg. Die Akzeptanz für eine Beteiligung deutscher Streitkräfte bei "Out-of-Area" Operationen unter NATO Befehl ist zwar höher, findet aber ebenfalls keine Mehrheit. Allerdings ist die Akzeptanz am höchsten unter den Jugendlichen, vor allem in West-Deutschland.

Drei Jahre nach der Vereinigung verbleiben in vielen Bereichen erhebliche Einstellungsdifferenzen zwischen Ost- und Westdeutschen. Nirgends wird dies deutlicher, als an der Haltung gegenüber den USA und zu sicherheitspolitischen Fragen. Allerdings sind in der ostdeutschen Bevölkerung einige Einstellungsmodifikationen erkennbar, die insbesondere die jüngere Generation betreffen. Eine der markantesten Unterschiede zu den Westdeutschen im Bereich der Sicherheitspolitik ist die bei den Ostdeutschen ausgeprägte und dauerhaft ablehnende Haltung gegenüber militärischen Belangen—sei es die Präsenz amerikanischer Truppen, der Grundsatz militärischer Intervention zur Verteidigung der Menschenrechte oder die Rolle der Bundeswehr bei "Out-of-Area" Einsätzen unter UNO- bzw. NATO-Befehl. Die mehrheitlich skeptische Haltung der ostdeutschen Bevölkerung in Fragen Sicherheitspolitik ist umso bemerkenswerter, da auch die Westdeutschen in dieser Hinsicht häufig gespalten sind. Der "ostdeutsche Faktor" gibt hier deshalb gesamtdeutsch gesehen häufig den Ausschlag.

In gewisser Weise beginnt Deutschland zu dem Partner in Europa zu "reifen", den sich die amerikanische Politik immer schon gewünscht hat. Es bleibt jedoch abzuwarten, wie Bonn letztendlich die Widersprüche löst, die im öffentlichen Meinungsbild erkennbar sind. Die Deutschen sehen ihr Land als dasjenige an, das am ehesten eine

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank Richard Hilmer, Managing Director of Infratest Burke Berlin, and Anne Koehler for their extensive support in initiating and sustaining this research effort. Within RAND, David Ochmanek played a crucial role in initiating the first study in the spring of 1990. This survey research effort would not have been continued without the subsequent support of James Thomson, George Donohue, David Gompert, and Jonathan Pollack. Fritz Fliszar, President of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, deserves thanks for providing the political and financial support that enabled the project to grow into a true example of German-American friendship and co-operation in a rapidly changing world.

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A final word of appreciation goes to those friends and colleagues from the Department of Defense, Department of State, and other U.S. government agencies in Washington who participated in several roundtable discussions to identify issues of special concern to American policymakers. The same applies to those German colleagues in the Ministry of Defense, the Foreign Office, and the Federal Press Office who helped spread the word on the results and their

policy ramifications. The conclusions, of course, are those of the author.

In the fall of 1990, RAND initiated a survey research effort designed to identify for U.S. policymakers how trends in German public opinion could reshape German strategic thinking over the next decade. Working with Infratest Burke Berlin, RAND launched a multiyear research effort exploring changing German public attitudes on issues and questions identified as potential “building blocks” for future German national security thinking.

The motivation for these studies can be traced back to the spring of 1990. It was clear that Germany was on a fast track toward unification. Europe’s strategic landscape was being transformed at a breathtaking pace. Germany’s future strategic orientation would be central to future European stability and to American interests on the continent. What was unclear was how the dramatic changes taking place in and around Germany would reshape German attitudes toward the United States and the Atlantic Alliance, the European Union, and Germany’s future role in the East. These questions, however, were central to longer-term U.S. strategic planning with regard to Europe.

The purpose of these studies was to address a simple question: How will Germans define their post-Cold War strategic interests? To help answer this question, RAND designed a set of questionnaires focusing on those issues of special interest for American policymakers and the U.S.-German relationship. A premium was placed on identifying underlying trends and “building block” issues that might help convey where Germany was headed as a new strategic actor in Europe over the next decade. A deliberate attempt was made to stay away from

specific short-term issues in favor of questions that would help establish a benchmark documenting the future evolution of German attitudes as the country responds to a radically changed strategic environment.

These studies provide snapshots of how Germany's strategic mindset has been reshaped by events taking place on and beyond its immediate borders during the past four years. The four years during which these surveys were conducted have witnessed a remarkable series of events—German unification, the Persian Gulf War, the unraveling of the USSR, war in the Balkans, attempted coups in Russia, and a growing debate over the future of the Atlantic Alliance and whether NATO should expand to the East or assume a greater role in resolving conflicts on Europe's periphery beyond its current borders. The effect of these events is reflected both in the questionnaires used in these surveys and, more important, in the survey results themselves.

These studies do not provide an all-encompassing view of shifting public opinion in a unified Germany. Rather, they provide an in-depth look at a specific set of issues of great importance to the future U.S.-German security relationship. Other aspects of German public opinion are covered elsewhere in the existing literature. Not only does Germany itself have a number of world class polling firms conducting regular research, but a number of American institutions, above all the United States Information Agency (USIA), also conduct regular polls on German public opinion. These studies do, however, draw on existing data from other sources where appropriate for a more complete picture.

The initial studies were sponsored by RAND and the United States Air Force and these results have been published in past years.¹ It soon became clear that the survey results were potentially of interest to a much broader policy audience on both sides of the Atlantic, and especially in Germany itself. In 1993, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation joined RAND in cosponsoring these surveys. This report fo-

¹See Ronald D. Asmus, *German Perceptions of the United States at Unification* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, R-4069-AF, 1991); *Germany in Transition: National Self-Confidence and International Reticence* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, N-3522-AF, 1992); and *Germany's Geopolitical Maturation: Strategy and Public Opinion After the Wall* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, IP-105, 1993).

cuses on the results of the most recent survey conducted in late 1993 before the January 1994 NATO summit while drawing on past surveys to present a composite picture of trends since German unification.

A final word should be added on two issues. First, when analyzing survey data, one must distinguish between what Daniel Yankelovich has called "raw opinion" on the one hand, and responsible "public judgment" on the other. "Raw opinion" refers to views that are often recently formed and therefore unstable and at times contradictory as the public has not yet wrestled with the tradeoffs, hard choices and conflicts of values that important issues often pose.²

In contrast are those issues where the public has made what Yankelovich calls "the long voyage from casual opinion to thoughtful consideration"—i.e., where it has more or less made up its mind. There are issues on which the public does indeed hold firm and consistent opinions and others where opinions are volatile or are still being shaped, and where discrepancies may appear in different or even the same polls. The public can hold views that are at times inconsistent or even contradictory.

Second, politicians both shape and follow public opinion. The relationship between the two is often complex. Public opinion trends should not necessarily be viewed prescriptively, but rather as a barometer of public sentiments that define the challenges that elected political leaders in Western democracies must confront. In short, political leaders both shape and follow public opinion. The history of post-war Germany offers several examples of political leaders taking important steps widely recognized to have been successful in spite of prevailing public opinion, above all on security issues. As Helmut Kohl himself noted recently:

Political leadership also means not following the mood of the moment in existential issues. If Konrad Adenauer had followed public opinions polls our country would never have become a member of the North Atlantic Alliance. . . . If I had followed public opinion polls in 1982/83, then the NATO dual track decision would never have been implemented. As Mikhail Gorbachev himself told me, how-

²See Daniel Yankelovich, *Coming to Public Judgment* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991).

ever, it was precisely the unity and steadfastness of the Alliance in the early 1980s that contributed to the “new thinking” of the Soviet leadership and in the final analysis also to German unification. Finally, if we had made our decision in the summer of 1990 regarding German unity based solely on public opinion trends, then we would never have introduced economic and monetary union. We had to do it and it was the right thing to do.³

Finally, public opinion is a crucial but by no means the only piece of the puzzle showing where Germany’s geopolitics are headed. For this reason, these studies were complemented from the outset by an ongoing set of interviews with leading German representatives from a variety of sources—parliamentarians, senior officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the Ministry of Defense and the Chancellor’s Office, and survey research experts. The results of these interviews have been integrated with the survey results to provide a more complete picture of the factors driving German strategy and public opinion after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

³See Helmut Kohl’s speech before a conference of German survey researchers reprinted in *Bulletin*, No. 121, November 11, 1992.

GERMANY'S NEW GEOPOLITICS

Quo vadis Germany? This question is central to the future of Europe and the Atlantic Alliance. Following the end of the Cold War, Germans confront a radically altered strategic environment posing new questions about their country's future strategic role in Europe and beyond. German unification, the collapse of communism, the unraveling of the Soviet Union—this is a strategic transformation of breathtaking proportions and Germans are still grappling with it.

If the old German Question centered on the issue of German unity, then the new German Question focuses on what geopolitical role will a reunited Germany now assume in Europe and beyond. Such issues have not necessarily been on the front burner of German politics, which instead remain focused on the challenges of knitting together the two halves of a country divided for some four decades during the Cold War. Nevertheless Germany has been thrust back into its historical Mittellage, Europe's geopolitical cockpit, and German leaders again face the traditional dilemmas rooted in geography and geopolitics that have bedeviled past German statesmen.

Nevertheless, the question is likely to grow in importance in the years ahead as the initial euphoria of communism's collapse continues to fade and the new dangers in Europe's new strategic landscape become ever more evident. For the revolutions of 1989 not only led to communism's demise; they also unleashed forces that have unraveled the peace orders established in the wake of two world wars this century. German unification overturned the order established after World War II; the subsequent unraveling of the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia has largely undone the outcome of World War I.

War in the Balkans, instability in the former USSR, the slowdown in European integration, and increased uncertainty over the future U.S. role and the survival of NATO all underscore a renewed sense of fragility in Europe.

In short, some four years following the fall of the Berlin Wall, memories of democracy's triumph in Central Europe are waning. A sense of exhaustion has supplanted the initial exhilaration released by the democratic revolutions of 1989. Apprehension about the future is growing as the magnitude of the problems ahead is starting to be recognized. As the graffiti on a wall of Leipzig University aptly put it: "Capitalism didn't win. It was simply the only one left." Some German commentators have raised the question whether the crisis facing Europe is not a Balkan crisis, or even a crisis of fragile democracies in Eastern Europe or Russia, but rather a crisis of Western liberal democracy. In the words of Theo Sommer, editor of the influential weekly *Die Zeit*:

It can no longer be denied. It is also in the West that the foundations are starting to teeter. Suddenly, everything which previously was stable is starting to slip—NATO, the European Community, the global free trade system. In 1989 the ideas of democracy and the free market triumphed. But the parties, institutions, and ideologies built upon these ideas have lost much of their persuasive power, their legitimacy and their political impact. The states of the West are in a crisis—foreign policy, domestic, economic and spiritual. . . . Frank Fukuyama was wrong in a double sense in 1989. He prophesied the end of history and instead we see the return of history—accompanied by a lot of warlike tumult. He also prophesied the triumph of liberal democracy. In reality, democracy is under existential attack.¹

Germany's voice will be crucial in determining whether the West collectively summons the political will and strategic vision to address the causes of potential instability and conflict. Germany was, of course, one of the great winners of the end of the Cold War. The collapse of communism paved the way for German unification under Western auspices—an outcome that almost no one dared to believe was even possible only several years before. German leaders were

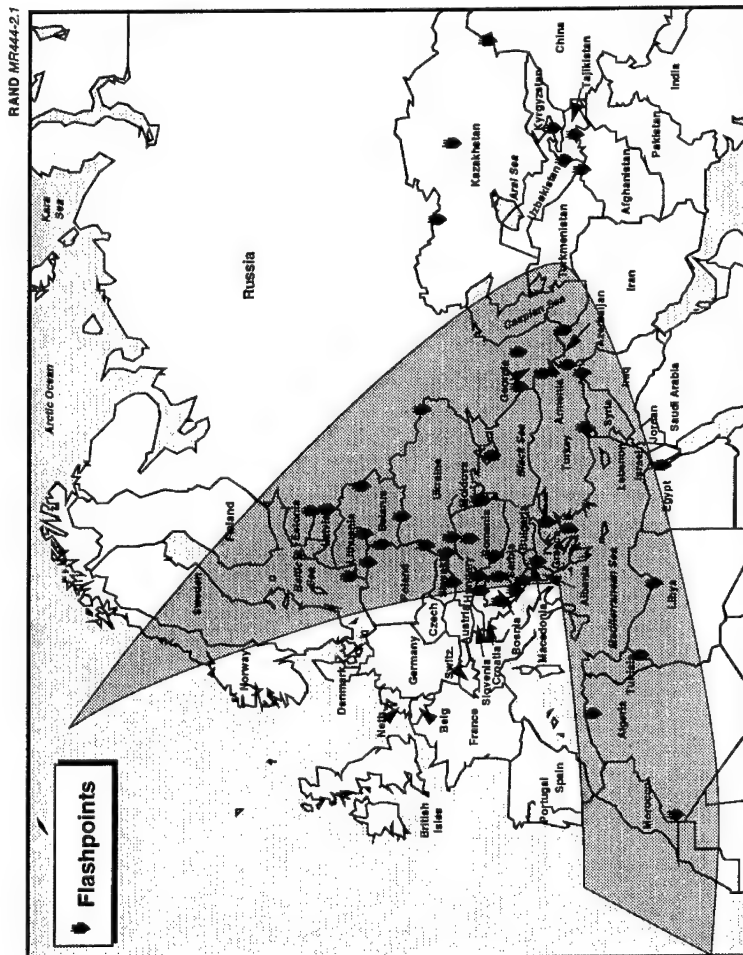
¹See Theo Sommer, "Die Krise holt den Westen ein," *Die Zeit*, No. 15, April 9, 1993.

convinced a new age had dawned in Europe and they proudly spoke of the role they envisioned for their country as a trailblazer for a united Europe and a bridge between West and East.

The paradox is that now Germany could also become the great loser in post-Cold War Europe. Although Germany has again become Europe's largest and potentially most powerful country, it has also (again) inherited the enduring dilemmas rooted in geography and geopolitics. With the end of the Cold War, German leaders see the new strategic challenges in and around Europe almost exclusively along the so-called "arcs of crisis." One is the Eastern arc—the zone of instability between Germany and Russia running from Northern Europe down through Turkey, the Caucasus, and Middle Asia. Another is the Southern arc, running through Northern Africa and the Mediterranean into the Middle East, and Southwest Asia. These "arcs of crisis" encompass the numerous potential points of conflict from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and from Germany's eastern border to Central Asia. (See Figure 2.1.)

Developments along these arcs, especially the Eastern arc, are crucial for future European stability in general and that of Germany in particular. The same dangerous mix of rising nationalism and ethno-political mobilization that has led to war in the Balkans exists throughout the Eastern arc of crisis on Germany's eastern border. The prospect of such instability—and the need to preempt or contain it—has become an important driver in the new debate over future German security policy. There is little question that a destabilization of the eastern half of Europe would have an enormous effect on Europe's western half. Such instability could set off a vicious chain reaction in the region. Finally, lurking in the background is the ominous prospect of the same process leading to a shift toward the right and imperial restoration in Russia.

While Germany remains preoccupied with the staggering challenge of the political and economic reconstruction of its eastern half, the need to stabilize Germany's eastern flank is rapidly becoming the number one security concern for the German political class. Germans are being driven, slowly and at times erratically, to define a new strategy by their new position in Europe's new strategic landscape and by their perceptions of new threats and challenges that



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 2.1—The Twin Arcs of Crisis

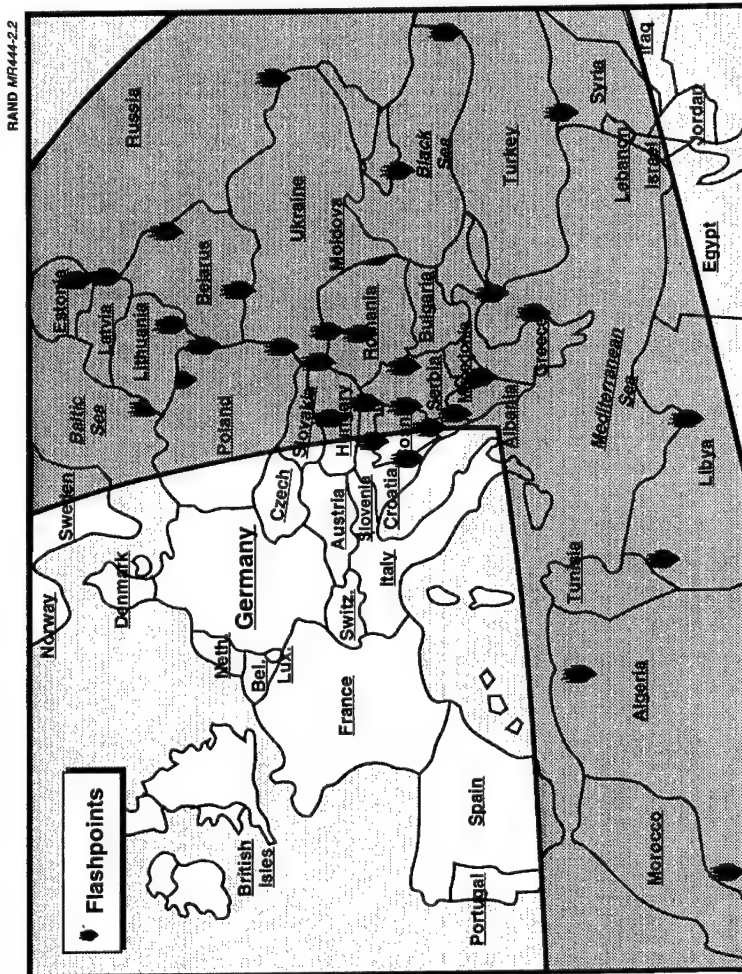
confront them as events unfold in and around them (the war in the former Yugoslavia, potential instability in East-Central Europe and the former USSR, etc.). As Figure 2.2 suggests, Germany's exposed position along the Eastern arc makes it, of all the countries of the European Union and NATO, the most vulnerable to future instability and crises there.

A unified Germany again finds itself as the "country in the middle," playing the role of bridge-builder in a very unbalanced Europe—politically, economically, and militarily. It once again occupies its historical position at Europe's crossroads, the place where cultures and ideologies of the West and East have clashed, commingled, and competed with one another. The country's destiny and fate have never been solely determined by events within its borders, but rather by the interaction of those events with trends both further West and East.

GERMANY'S GEOPOLITICAL MATURATION

A democratic, unified Germany is at the beginning of a process of geopolitical normalization—i.e., the process of defining its future interests, its geopolitical horizon, and its role in the new Europe and beyond. The Federal Republic was sheltered from having to deal with many of these dilemmas during the Cold War. To be sure, the Cold War had produced a stability in Europe that was artificial, precarious, and, of course, based on the division of Germany and Europe. At the same time, this stability allowed the Federal Republic to survive in a kind of geopolitical niche sheltered from having to confront broader strategic and geopolitical issues.

When the Federal Republic was created in 1949 it was devoid of any military instruments. When the decision was made to rearm the Federal Republic in the 1950s, Germany was not being rehabilitated as a power where armed forces were a "normal" instrument of statecraft; rather, the German military contribution was an integrated part of a broader U.S.-led effort to contain Soviet expansionism. NATO was seen by Germans as a political instrument to organize allied support for the defense of German territory. Almost no thought was given to the possibility that German forces might be called upon to assist another member of the alliance.



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 2.2—Germany's New Geopolitics

Germany was a "consumer," not a "producer," of security in Europe. In Germany it became conventional wisdom that no one wanted to see Germany ever again develop a major military role or a power projection capability. Strategic studies as such were never really fully developed in postwar Germany. The tight integration of Germany in the alliance was designed to prevent independent German strategic thinking from emerging. Although the Federal Republic became a country endowed with institutes devoted to arms control and "peace studies," it never developed a strategic community in the sense that it is understood in the United States, France, or the United Kingdom.

Within Germany, concepts of grand strategy remained largely taboo. Open debates about German national interests rarely occurred. Not only was "the nation" a divisive concept in a divided country with Germany's past, but the West German political elite was proud to point out that Germans were seeking to define a postnational identity in the context of the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance. German diplomats became experts in shrouding their interests in the diplomatic language of multilateralism and integration. Indeed, it was only in 1992, two years after German unification, that the first published document on German national security appeared containing an explicit attempt to define German national interests—published by German Minister of Defense Volker Ruehe in the form of his Defense Policy Guidelines.²

"Geopolitics" was a term that Germans avoided for it reminded them of *Machtpolitik* and a militaristic past that contemporary Germany has forsworn. Geopolitical abstinence was willingly embraced in a country with its own war trauma and the discredited legacy of the use of military force to achieve political purposes—rooted in the excesses of National Socialism and its glorification of the cult of war and power politics. The realization that a future military conflict in Central Europe between NATO and the Warsaw Pact would devastate both German states reinforced the conviction that political goals could not be achieved through the use of force.

Although Germans were willing to recognize the legitimacy of military force as a necessary instrument for national self-defense, they

²Minister Volker Ruehe, *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien* (Bonn: German Ministry of Defense, November 1992).

were uncomfortable with the notion that responsible democracies could and should, under certain circumstances, use military force to preserve stability or to uphold principles of international law. It became increasingly fashionable in Germany to argue that Germans had learned the lessons of history and that German policy should aim to create a world where force was no longer a legitimate tool to achieve desired political goals. In the mid-1980s the German historian Hans-Peter Schwarz captured this transformation in German attitudes in a book entitled "The Tamed Germans" where he argued that although Germans had previously been preoccupied with power politics, they had now developed an "obliviousness to power" that explained the seeming inability of many Germans to think in categories of geopolitics and military power.³

The largely peaceful collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War initially reinforced the view that geopolitics was passé. Many German commentators proclaimed a new world order where integration had won over nationalism, military power would be supplanted by economic might, and where countries such as Germany and Japan would reign supreme. That sense of euphoria was bound to dissipate eventually, but the Gulf War followed by the war in ex-Yugoslavia have come as a rude shock. The Gulf War destroyed the illusion that all conflicts could be resolved through peaceful means; and war in the former Yugoslavia shattered the belief that nationalism and war had been banned from the European continent.

Their combined effect has served as a catalyst for rethinking the assumptions about the type of world German foreign policy will be confronted with in the future. It has raised questions as to whether Germany is equipped with the proper strategic mindset and policy instruments for the challenges ahead. Germans are being forced, in many ways for the first time in the postwar period, openly and publicly, to discuss basic issues of national interests, possible future threats, the appropriate use of power, ends versus means, etc.

Public opinion is an important part of this new equation. It shapes the willingness, or lack thereof, of the political class to address these issues, to openly identify German interests, and to define and pursue

³Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Die gezeahmten Deutschen. Von der Machtbesessenheit zur Machtvergessenheit* (Stuttgart: Deutsche-Verlags-Anstalt, 1985).

new strategies. With the German political class uncertain and often divided over these issues, public opinion has frequently been invoked—along with the debate over the proper interpretation of German Basic Law and the sensitivities of Germany's neighbors—as factors justifying a “go slow” approach in terms of assuming new security responsibilities in and around Europe.

A top priority in the RAND surveys was to get a better sense of what Germans saw as the key foreign policy issues facing their country and how important these problems were compared with the domestic issues confronting the country. Another concerned the issue of where and how Germans defined their vital interests, and what threats they perceived to these interests. A final issue was what factors were likely to drive the German debate in the years ahead.

“ES GEHT UM DIE WIRTSCHAFT, DUMMKOPF!”

How important are foreign and defense policy issues in post-Cold War German politics? During the 1992 U.S. Presidential campaign, James Carville, a close aide to then-candidate Bill Clinton, became famous in American politics for putting up a sign in the Little Rock campaign headquarters that stated: “It’s the economy stupid!” That slogan became a metaphor for the dominance of domestic issues in American post-Cold War politics.

As Germany readies itself for some 19 federal and state elections in 1994, Carville’s German counterparts might be tempted to pin up a sign in their respective offices stating: “Es geht um die Wirtschaft, Dummkopf!” To be sure, the German public is most concerned about domestic issues, above all the state of the German economy. Asked in the autumn of 1993 to identify the most important problems facing the country today, two-thirds (65 percent) of Germans mentioned unemployment—an increase from one-third (33 percent) in 1992. The top concern in 1992—dealing with the influx of asylum-seekers—dropped from over half (56 percent) to one-quarter (24 percent). The latter number reflects the German government’s success in dealing with public concern over this issue through new legislation implemented this past summer. (See Table 2.1.)

Table 2.1

What Are the Most Important Problems Facing the Country?

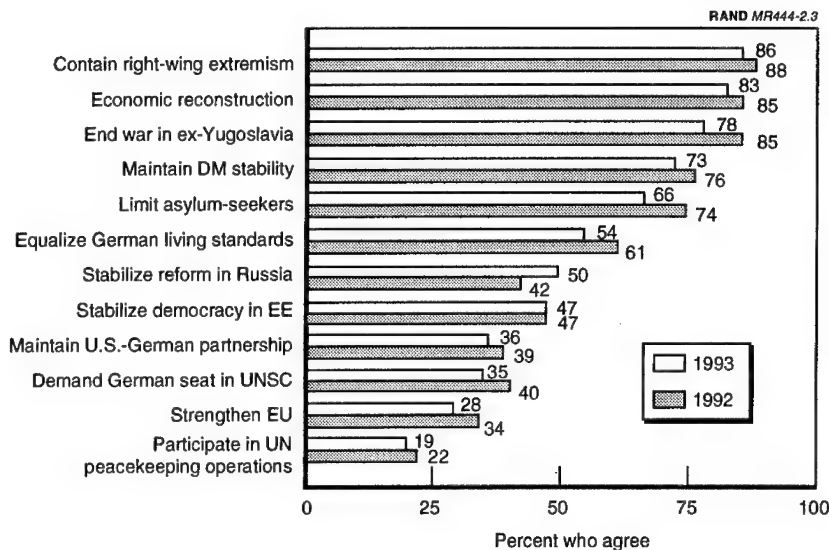
Domestic	1992	1993	Foreign Policy	1992	1993
Unemployment	33	65	European unification	26	21
Economy	33	26	Eastern Europe	12	20
Asylum-seekers	56	24	Role of Bundeswehr	—	20
Hostility to foreigners	15	15	Détente, arms control	10	17
Unification problems	11	12	Germany's world image	14	12
Crime	9	12	War in ex-Yugoslavia	16	11
Right-wing extremism	31	9	Immigration	13	7

SOURCE: RAND.

How important are national security questions at a time when Germany has one of the highest unemployment rates in decades and the country is trying to come to terms with the staggering costs of unification? The issue is saliency and the immediate answer is also simple—not very important until you can no longer afford to ignore them. Just as President Bill Clinton in the United States has been forced to turn his attention to foreign policy crises as they emerge, Germans, too, are finding that real world events will not allow them to look only at domestic concerns.

To test the German public's sense of priorities, RAND presented survey respondents with a list containing both domestic and foreign policy issues, and asked them to identify which tasks they viewed as the most important for the German government. The results are contained in Figure 2.3. The list is topped by the task of containing right-wing extremism, followed by economic reconstruction and ending the war in the former Yugoslavia. Also noteworthy is what is at the bottom of this list of priorities—German participation in UN peacekeeping operations, strengthening European integration, and demanding a permanent German seat in the UN Security Council.

A closer look at the results in Figure 2.3 suggests that it documents a fact that is both commonsensical and crucial for understanding the future German debate. This figure presents a list of the very real problems Germany has on its plate today. Moreover, at times the dividing line between domestic and foreign policy is blurred if it exists at all. For example, is stabilizing "democracy in Eastern Europe" or "reform in Russia" the former or the latter? Both.



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 2.3—Most Important Tasks Facing the German Government

What this list nonetheless suggests is that German public perceptions on future national security issues will be driven by real world problems that touch upon the tangible interests and concerns of the average German. Hair-splitting constitutional debates over Germans participating in peacekeeping operations in distant Somalia or Cambodia may preoccupy government civil servants and bureaucrats but are not the driving factor in the public's mind. Instead, those factors likely to drive the German debate in the future are likely to be found in events far closer to home, events that touch upon tangible German interests in and around Europe.

DEFINING GERMAN VITAL INTERESTS

One of the most important questions facing a unified Germany is how and where it will define its "vital interests." At the same time, a concept that is a cornerstone of national policy and accepted currency in political discourse in countries such as the United States, France, or the United Kingdom is shrouded with taboos and ambigu-

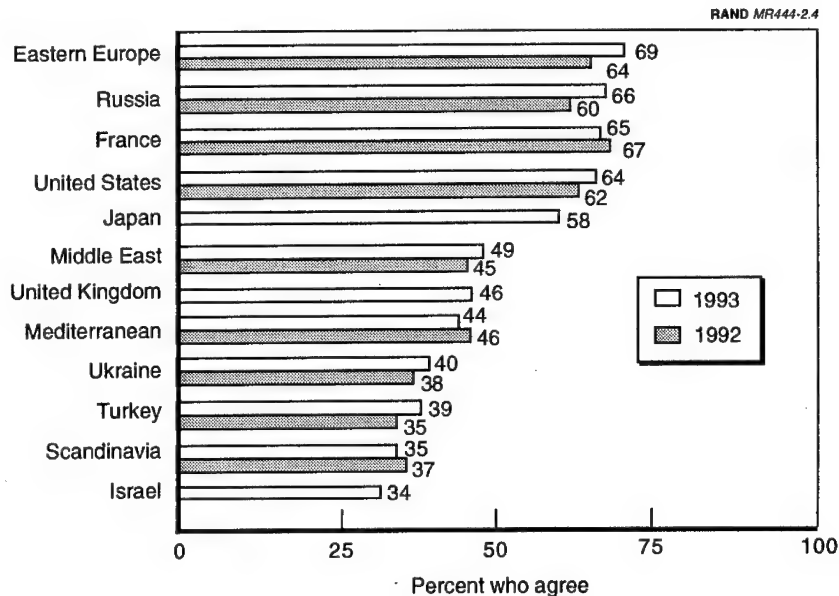
ity in the German political context. The problems surrounding this issue were quickly revealed in the preparations for the RAND surveys. During focus group discussions conducted in the summer of 1990 on the issue, a number of participants were simply unable to even define German “national interests.” The word “national” had strong negative connotations and was rejected in many cases. According to one West German participant: “When I hear the word national, somehow I don’t know, nationalism doesn’t really exist with us—flags and all that, we have problems with these things, we are simply burdened by history.” East Germans had an especially difficult time with the concept. One East German participant asked, “What is the national interest of a unified Germany? I haven’t even become a real German yet.” Such ambivalence also extended to many in the German elite who expressed some nervousness that the RAND studies would focus on this issue.⁴

The solution RAND arrived at was to take a series of questions that has long been used by Gallup in the United States in its work for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations on American views of U.S. vital interests.⁵ The Gallup series consists of three questions asking Germans to identify their vital interests geographically, to identify the threats they perceive to those vital interests, and to identify what countries they see as potential challengers to their vital interests in the years ahead.

The results for Germany are contained in the figures below. In 1993, Eastern Europe and Russia topped the list of Germany’s “vital interests” followed by France, which had enjoyed the top slot in 1992. (See Figure 2.4.) There clearly is a first tier of countries that Germans

⁴One German official, when asked by the author whether he thought such questions were a good idea, responded: “We all know that this is the key issue and one to which neither we nor the German public has heretofore given much thought. And in a way, we all want you to ask the question because we realize that we will have to confront these issues in the years ahead, and it would be fascinating to somehow document how public attitudes evolve over time. But we are afraid that the results will either be embarrassing or will be exploited in a way that will harm our reputation. We, therefore, secretly want you to pose the question but to promise us that the results will be kept confidential.” Interview with the author, June 1991.

⁵See John E. Reilly, ed., *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1991* (Chicago: The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1991).



SOURCE: RAND.

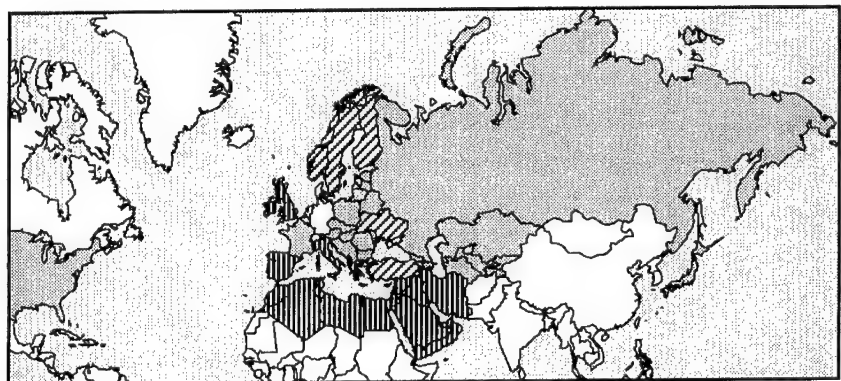
Figure 2.4—German Vital Interests

view as vital interests—Eastern Europe (69 percent), Russia (66 percent), France (65 percent), and the United States (64 percent). In short, Germans look both East and West when they define their interests. These results are transposed onto a map in Figure 2.5.

When asked to identify the greatest “critical threats” to Germany’s “vital interests” in the years ahead, those threats of greatest concern to the German public clearly lie in the East—the spread of nationalism, nuclear proliferation, ethnic and regional conflict, and emigration. Figure 2.6 clearly shows how concern over Russia has been overtaken by other possible “critical threats” in the public’s mind.

The final question in this trilogy addressed the issue of which countries were viewed as the key competitors with Germany in the areas of economic and security policy. Economically, the German public views Japan (64 percent) as its key competitor followed by the United States (12 percent). In the case of security policy, the fact that “don’t know” was the top response in both 1992 and 1993 confirms the fact

RAND MR444-2.5

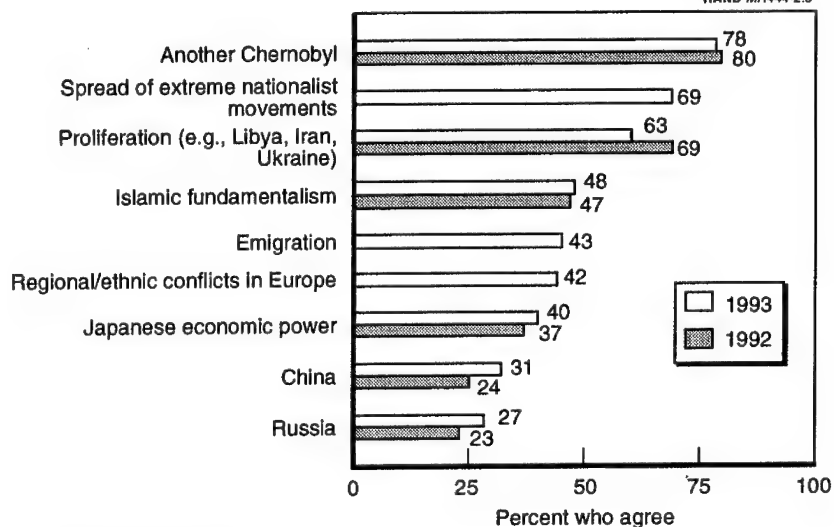


50-70% (France, EE, USA, Russia) 41-50% (Mediterranean, Middle East)
40% and less (Ukraine, Scandinavia, Turkey)

SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 2.5—Map of German Vital Interests

RAND MR444-2.6



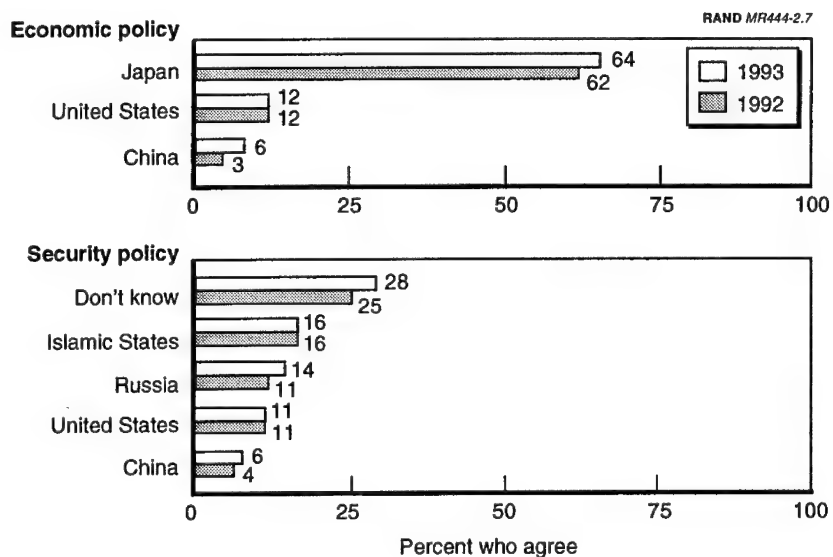
SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 2.6—Threats to German Vital Interests

that German security concerns remain diffuse and unfocused and that no one single threat has yet crystallized in the public's mind as the main security challenge for the years ahead. (See Figure 2.7.)

GERMANY'S "ZWANG NACH OSTEN"

The fact that the German public has identified Eastern Europe as the country's most important "vital interest" is part of what this author has previously termed Germany's new "Zwang nach Osten."⁶ It does not reflect any aggressive German intent—Germany's historic "Drang nach Osten" of previous centuries—but rather a defensive and pragmatic realization that Germany is most vulnerable to the



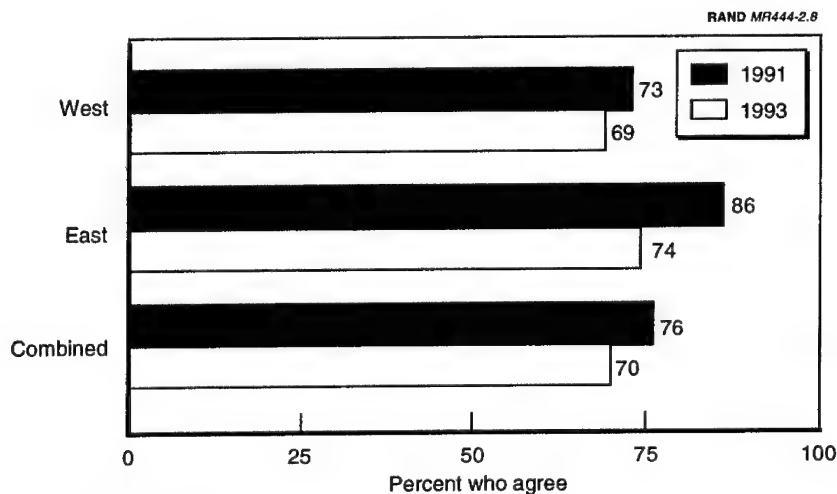
SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 2.7—Germany's Future Competitors

⁶Ronald D. Asmus, *German Unification and Its Ramifications* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, R-4021-A, 1991).

rise of nationalism and instability on its eastern borders.⁷ The growing concern over stability in the East is reflected in German responses to a variety of additional questions in the RAND surveys. Germans single out Eastern Europe as one of the top foreign policy issues facing the country today. Moreover, 70 percent of Germans responded that they have a “special responsibility” toward Eastern Europe. (See Figure 2.8.)

In both 1991 and 1993, those survey respondents who replied that Germany had a “special responsibility” toward Eastern Europe were also asked to identify the most important reason why this is the case. The top answer in both 1991 and 1993 was concern for peace and stability in Europe—reflecting the age-old German concern over



SOURCE: RAND.

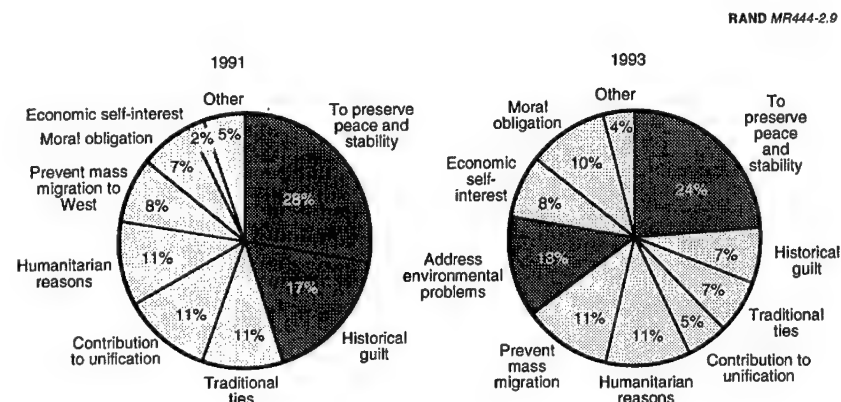
Figure 2.8—Germany’s Special Responsibility Toward Eastern Europe

⁷As one senior German government official put it in an interview with the author: “Germany’s strategic dilemma is that its national interests and those of NATO are contiguous in the South but not in the East. In the East our vital interests extend at least to Poland’s eastern border whereas the border of NATO does not. Therefore, it must be a key objective of German policy to extend the borders of the alliance to overlap with our vital interests.”

eastern instabilities. Whereas a sense of both historical guilt and gratitude for the East European role in the toppling of communism and German unification were important factors in 1991, they have since been replaced by more pragmatic concerns over environmental problems and emigration. (See Figure 2.9.)

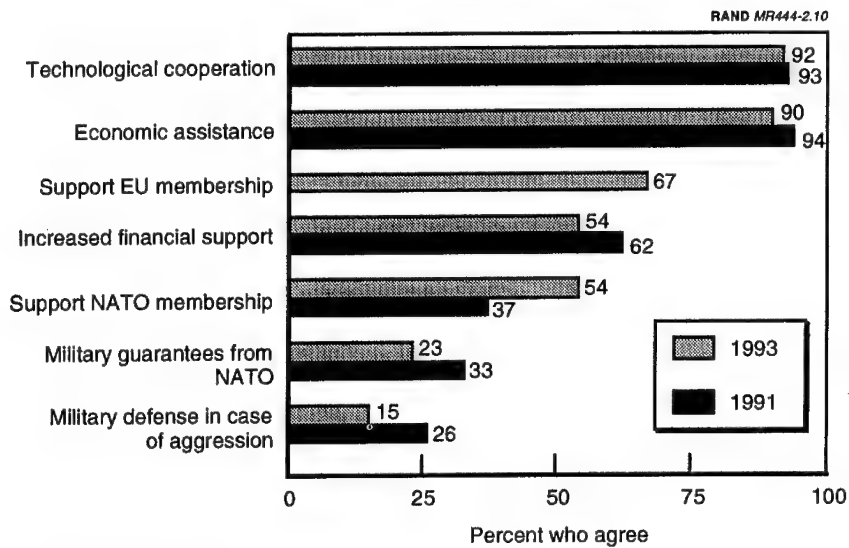
The fact that such problems are seen, first and foremost, in political and economic terms is reflected in German attitudes on what kind of policy steps Germany should pursue to best help these countries. Of those respondents who argued that Germany did have a "special responsibility" toward Eastern Europe, the main emphasis was placed on economic measures. Support for bringing these countries into the EU and, to a lesser degree NATO, is also noteworthy, an issue explored later. (See Figure 2.10.)

Even this cursory look at German public opinion has revealed several important conclusions, however. First, the German security debate is likely to be driven by events close to home that potentially affect Germany in a tangible fashion. Second, Eastern Europe is seen by the public as Germany's top "vital interest." Third, a number of those issues identified by the German public as "critical threats" are concentrated in the East. In short, if there is a prime candidate for



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 2.9—Reasons Behind Germany's Special Responsibility Toward Eastern Europe



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 2.10—How Best to Help Eastern Europe

the factor most likely to drive the German security debate in the years ahead, it is future events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The question is what institutions will the Germans turn to as they address these new interests and challenges.

GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES

The German-American relationship has been a pillar of the Atlantic Alliance. The close German-American bonds forged between two former enemies during the Second World War are one of the great success stories of the transatlantic relationship in the postwar period. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, this relationship started to show signs of strain. The bonds forged in the crucible of the Cold War seemed to erode as a result of the Vietnam War, differences over détente in the 1970s, as well as the peace movement, widespread opposition to the INF decision, and the Reagan Administration in the early 1980s. New "successor generations," which lacked the shared experience of the early postwar period, appeared poised to assume new positions of influence on both sides of the Atlantic, leading to renewed fears that Washington and Bonn were drifting apart.

German unification marked a clear watershed in U.S.-German relations. American support for German unity earned Washington considerable respect and appreciation at both the elite and public levels. Yet, with the Cold War ending many wondered what bonds would bind the two countries together in the future now that the shared threat of the Soviet Union was gone. What rationale existed for a special relationship between Washington and Bonn or even an American military presence in Germany? Although the negotiators of the "2 + 4" agreement on German unity were careful not to link the existence of Soviet and allied troops on German soil, many commentators wondered whether German attitudes toward the United States and the American presence in Germany might change once the Soviets had withdrawn.

To be sure, a similar set of concerns existed in Bonn. Would the Americans have the political foresight and will to remain engaged in Germany now that communism had collapsed? President George Bush had sought to lay out a new framework for the U.S.-German relationship before unification when he called upon Bonn to join Washington as “partners in leadership.” Yet, the German response was muted at best for it was unclear what purpose the partnership would serve.¹

The Gulf War, in turn, led to renewed tension across the Atlantic, raising concerns about anti-Americanism in Washington and American bellicosity in some circles in Bonn.² Finally, the election of Bill Clinton marked not only the political demise of George Bush, but in many ways the passing of a generation of American foreign policy leaders whose world view—and view of Germany—had been shaped during the Cold War. Clinton’s election as the first post-Cold War U.S. President meant that the so-called “successor generation” was indeed taking power—in Washington.

Against this background, one hardly needs to explain why one primary focus of the RAND studies was the evolution of German public attitudes toward the United States—the so-called *Amerikabild*—under the effect of unification, the collapse of communism, and the Gulf War. The questions asked ranged from topics as simple as whether Germans liked Americans to issues concerning the U.S. world role and NATO’s future missions. The results provide a mirror in which one can see both the strength of pro-American sentiment in German society and the expectation that the United States will remain a close ally on the one hand, and the growing uncertainty over the rationale and function of the American military presence on the other.

¹As one senior German official explained to the author at the time, although German leaders thoroughly enjoyed Bush’s praise, the President’s speech was “a real hot potato,” for no one knew for sure what Washington actually expected Bonn to do in the future. For further details see Ronald D. Asmus, “Germany and America: Partners in Leadership?” *Survival*, November–December 1991.

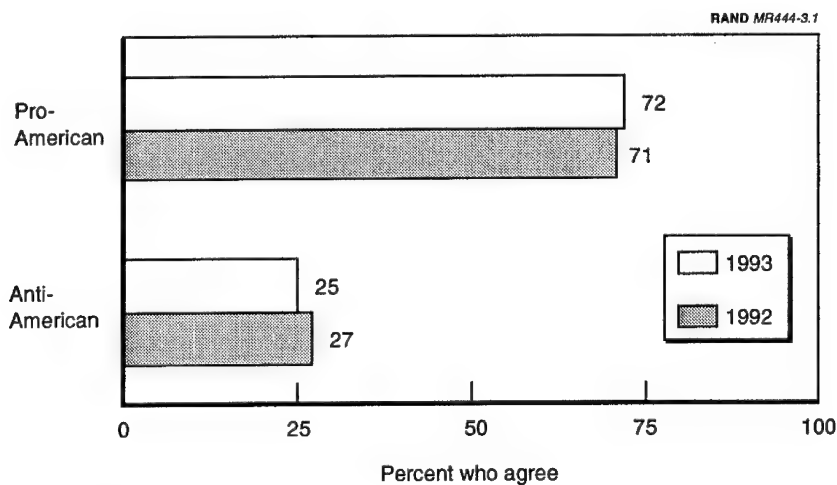
²The effect of the Gulf War on German attitudes toward the United States is discussed further in Asmus, *Germany in Transition*, op. cit., pp. 8–11.

SOURCES OF PRO-AMERICANISM

Despite ongoing speculation about a possible rise in anti-Americanism in Germany, there is a clear reservoir of support for the United States in Germany four years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1993, for example, nearly three-quarters of Germans (72 percent) viewed themselves as pro-American. (See Figure 3.1.)

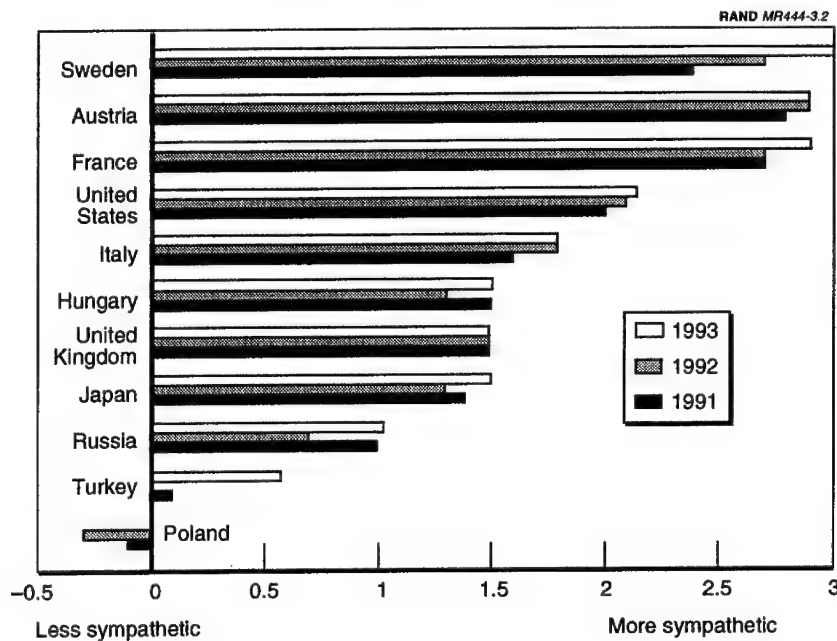
Over the past four years the RAND surveys have systematically asked Germans how much sympathy they have for different foreign countries. Survey respondents were presented with a scale ranging from +5 to -5, and asked to place different countries along this scale. Germans expressed the greatest sympathy for Sweden, Austria, and France followed by the United States. Sympathy for the United States, however, has actually *risen* since unification. (See Figure 3.2.)

West Germans remain far more sympathetic than East Germans toward the United States. There are some signs, however, that some of the old prejudices East Germans harbored toward the United States are starting to break down, above all among the youth. Indeed, Figure 3.2 documents how sympathy for the United States in 1992 was very high among 18-24 year olds. In the West, for example, it is



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.1—German Attitudes Toward the United States



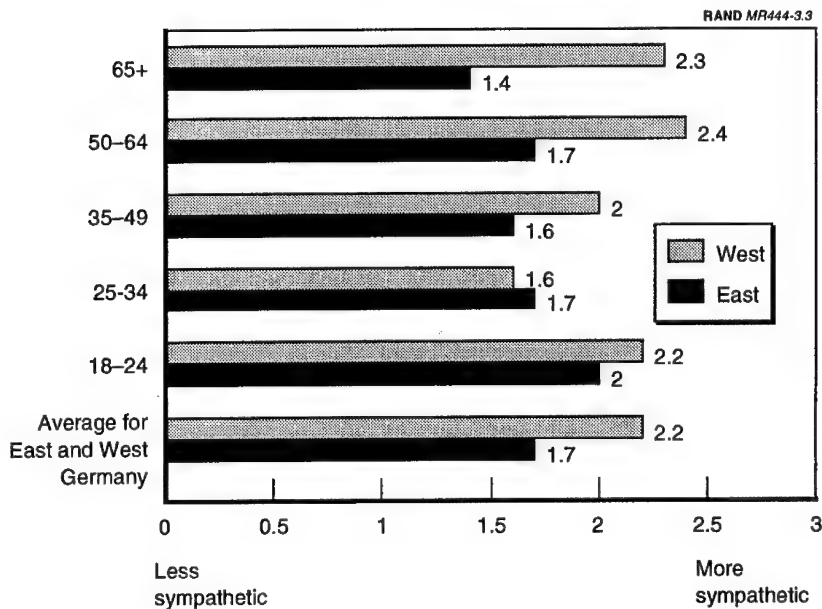
SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.2—Sympathy for Foreign Countries

almost as high as among the older generations well-known for their pro-American orientation. In the East, the United States is most liked by young East Germans, in sharp contrast to the older generations in the former GDR.³ (See Figure 3.3.)

There is, nevertheless, a clear desire among the German public for a more balanced relationship between the Federal Republic and the United States. Over the last four years, roughly one-half of the Germans polled have consistently stated that the United States has too much influence over German affairs. (See Figure 3.4.) The strong

³Whether this trend will continue is an interesting question. Unfortunately, because of a smaller sample size in the 1993 survey, it was impossible to compare this generation of West and East Germans.



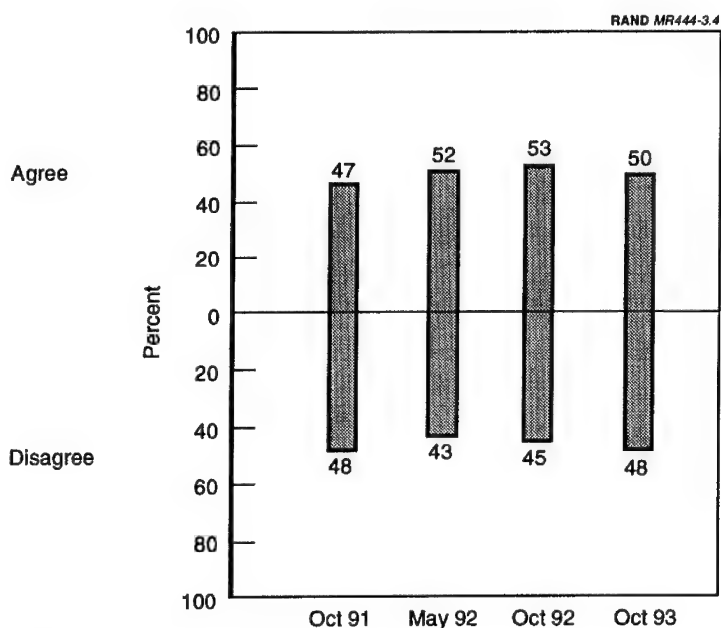
SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.3—German Sympathy Toward the United States by Generation, 1992

desire for a more equal relationship between the United States and Europe is also reflected in German attitudes toward the EU discussed in the following section.

GERMAN ATTITUDES TOWARD BILL CLINTON

What do Germans think about Bill Clinton, the first post-Cold War President of the United States? RAND was especially interested in two questions. The first was what the German public thought about Clinton's domestic agenda and the priority placed on addressing U.S. internal problems. Did Germans fear the United States turning inward and away from Europe? The second concerned German public

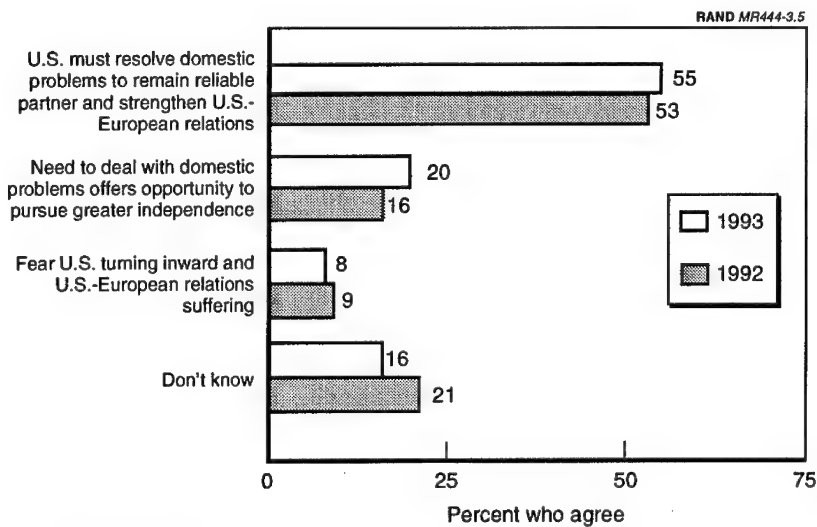


SOURCE: RAND.

**Figure 3.4—United States Has Too Much Influence
over German Affairs**

expectations of U.S. foreign policy under President Clinton, and specifically whether a loss of American predictability was feared under Democratic leadership in the White House.

Despite criticism in the German and European media over the low priority that U.S.-European relations received during the Clinton Administration's first year, the RAND surveys have found that the German public supports the U.S. President's attempts to address American domestic problems. In 1993, for example, more than half (55 percent) of Germans polled believed the United States must resolve its domestic problems if it is to remain a reliable partner for Germany in the future. Moreover, only 8 percent feared that U.S.-European relations would suffer as a result of the United States turning inward. (See Figure 3.5.)

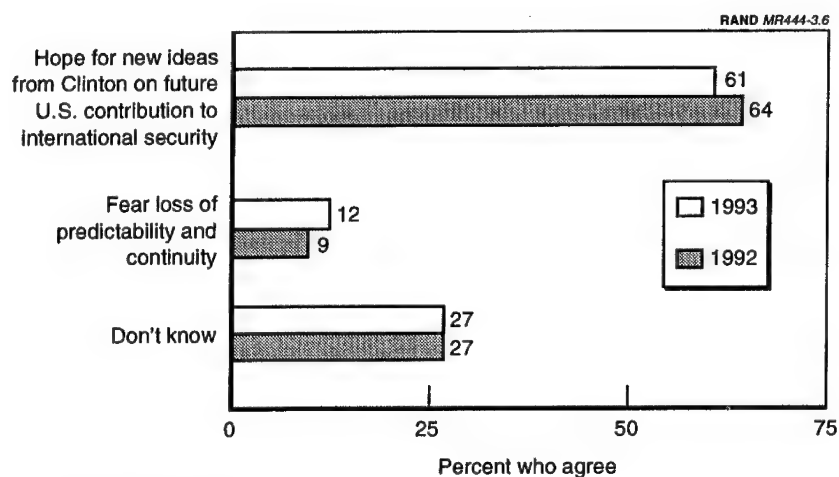


SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.5—German Attitudes Toward Clinton's Domestic Agenda

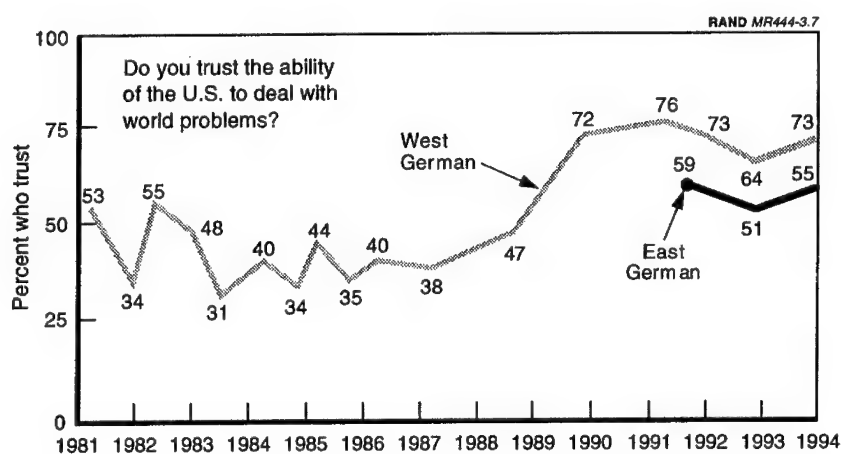
Similarly, although German commentators have expressed concern over Clinton's lack of foreign policy experience, the 1993 survey found that 61 percent of German respondents expressed the hope that a new Administration in Washington would lead to new ideas and concepts regarding the future American international role. Only 12 percent feared a loss of American predictability. (See Figure 3.6.) Moreover, 91 percent of Germans expect the United States to continue to be an important ally in the future. Two-thirds (69 percent) have confidence in the ability of the United States to deal responsibly with world problems. Figure 3.7 shows just how bumpy German public confidence in Washington has been since the early 1980s. Such support was very erratic under Ronald Reagan, and subsequently received an incredible boost because of George Bush's role in German unification in 1989. Washington has continued to enjoy a high degree of trust in the eyes of the German public ever since.

Finally, despite his lack of foreign policy experience, a majority of Germans also have trust in Bill Clinton as an international figure. Asked how much trust they had in various international political



SOURCE: RAND.

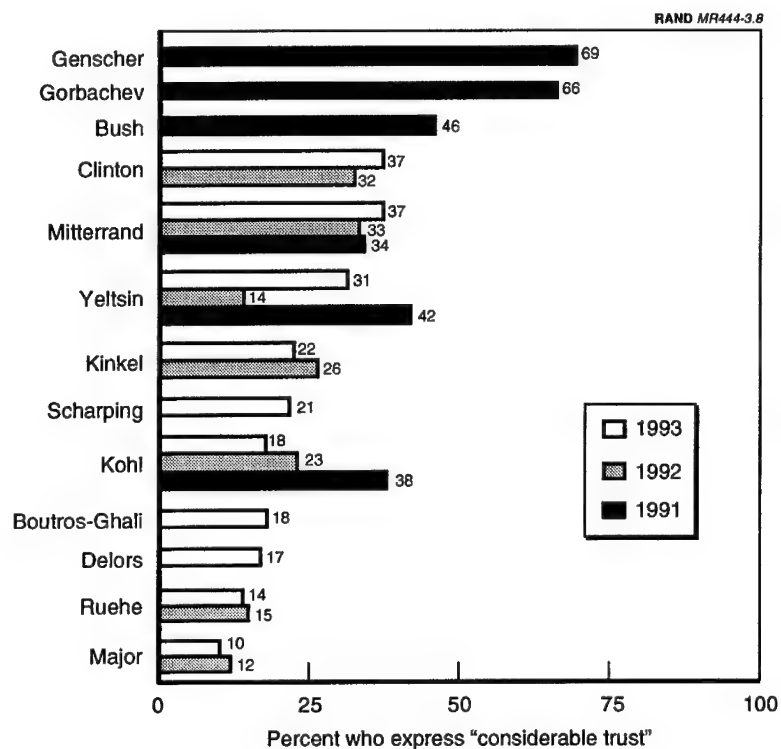
Figure 3.6—German Attitudes Toward Clinton's Foreign Policy



SOURCE: RAND/USIA.

Figure 3.7—German Confidence in U.S. Ability to Deal Responsibly with World Problems

figures, President Clinton and French President François Mitterrand led the pack of active politicians in 1993 with some 37 percent expressing “considerable trust.” However, the overall fall in confidence and trust in the political class is reflected in the fact that no current political leaders come close to the tremendous trust enjoyed but a few years ago by Hans-Dietrich Genscher or Mikhail Gorbachev. (See Figure 3.8.)



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.8—German Trust in International Political Figures

CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD NATO

One of the most striking findings of the RAND surveys regards evolving German public attitudes toward the Atlantic Alliance. Support for NATO has actually *risen* in both parts of Germany since unification and the end of the Cold War. In West Germany, support for NATO fell in the latter half of the 1980s under the effect of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's "new thinking" and the improvement in East-West relations in the run-up to the collapse of the Berlin Wall and German unification. It has since increased, however. In late 1993, nearly 72 percent of West Germans believed that NATO remains essential for German security. In the East, support for NATO has climbed from 35 percent in 1991 to 52 percent. (See Figure 3.9.) Belief in NATO had become so widespread that by late 1993 even a majority of voters for the Green Party (58 percent) now consider NATO essential for German security. (See Figure 3.10.)

Moreover, by the early 1990s it was also becoming increasingly clear that the NATO debate was changing in important ways. The key question was no longer whether or not the German public supported NATO, but rather what it wanted or expected NATO to actually do in the future. Should NATO's purpose remain limited to the traditional

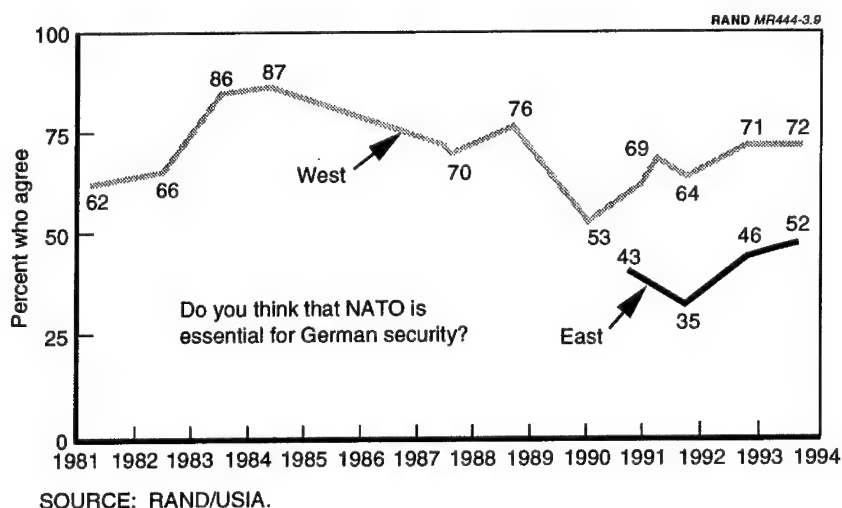
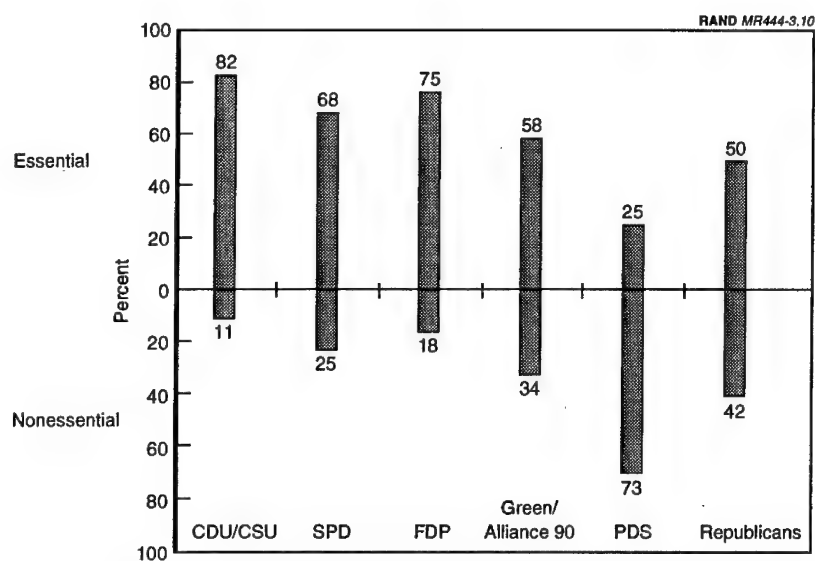


Figure 3.9—German Attitudes Toward NATO Essentiality



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.10—German Attitudes Toward NATO Essentiality, by Political Party

mission of territorial defense, in effect limiting its mission to the increasingly unlikely event of a revanchist Russia again threatening Western Europe, should it expand to include new members in Eastern Europe, or go “out of area” and assume new missions in response to the new instability and war emerging on Europe’s periphery, e.g., war in the former Yugoslavia? In 1993, these issues had become part of the public debate over the alliance’s future. In May, German Defense Minister Volker Ruehe introduced the issue into the German debate. Speaking at the same Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture where Chancellor Helmut Schmidt launched NATO’s famous debate over the dual track decision in 1977, Ruehe called for a new U.S.-European bargain, which would include NATO’s expansion into Eastern Europe.⁴ Shortly thereafter in the United States, Senator Richard Lugar echoed Ruehe when he called upon the alliance to

⁴See Volker Ruehe, “Shaping Euro-Atlantic Policies: A Grand Strategy for a New Era,” *Survival*, No. 2, Summer 1993, pp. 129–137.

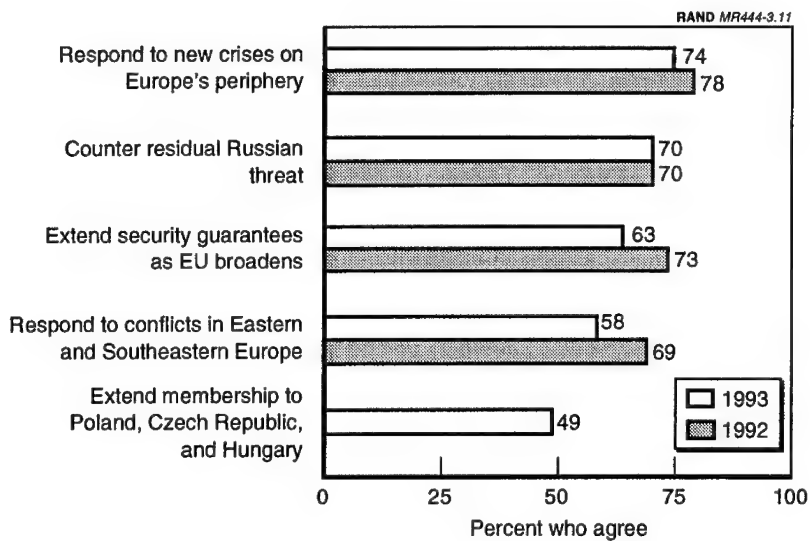
retool itself for the post-Cold War era by expanding to the East and developing the capabilities to project security around the periphery of Europe. The alliance, according to Lugar, faced the stark choice of going “out of area or out of business.”⁵

Already in 1992, RAND posed a question testing the German public’s response to the idea of NATO assuming a variety of possible new missions. Respondents were told that a new debate had emerged over NATO’s future rationale after the demise of the USSR, were presented with a list of new strategic missions for the alliance, and were asked whether they were in favor of NATO assuming this mission in the future. The results showed a surprisingly high degree of public support, in principle, for NATO to assume responsibility for these new security challenges.

In 1993, majorities supported NATO involvement in new crises on Europe’s periphery (74 percent), a crisis management role in Eastern and Southeastern Europe (58 percent), as well as the extension of security guarantees if and when East European countries join the EU (63 percent). One out of two Germans (49 percent) supported extending NATO membership to select East European countries. (See Figure 3.11.)

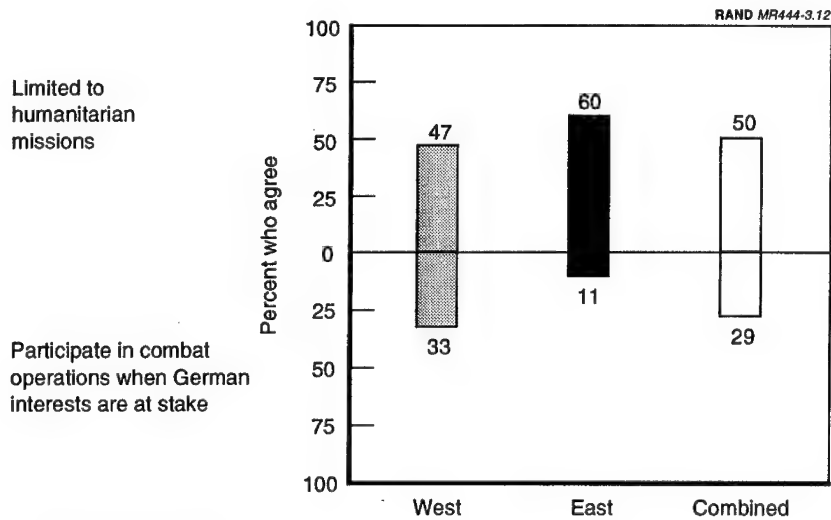
At the same time, it was unclear whether such support extended to the German public’s support for Bundeswehr participation in such missions. Therefore, in 1993 RAND also asked a follow-up question asking respondents whether they thought the Bundeswehr should participate in these new missions or whether its role should remain limited to territorial self-defense. German public attitudes were split on this issue: 44 percent of those Germans polled agreed that if NATO were to assume new missions the Bundeswehr would also have to participate in them; 55 percent claimed that the Bundeswehr’s role should remain limited to territorial defense and that Germany’s allies must assume responsibility for such new missions themselves. (See Figure 3.12.) Support for Germany assuming the same obligations as other NATO nations is highest among the younger generations in West Germany. More than one-half (54

⁵See Lugar’s speech at the Overseas Writers’ Club in Washington on June 24, 1993. Author’s private copy.



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.11—NATO's New Missions



SOURCE: RAND.

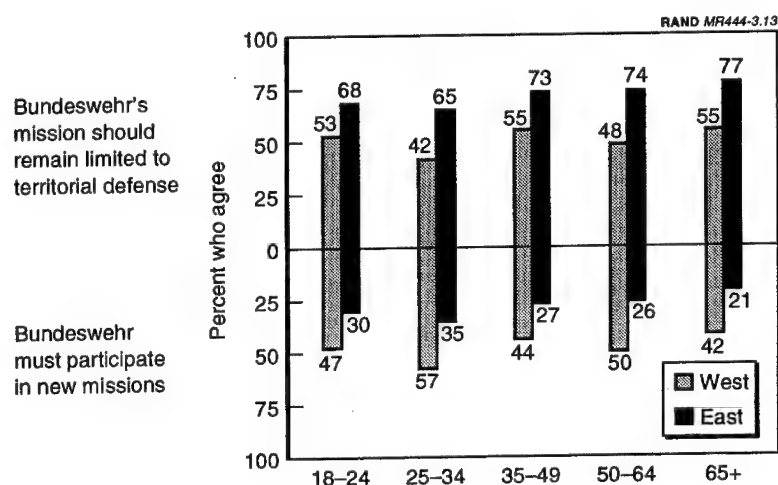
Figure 3.12—Bundeswehr and New NATO Missions

percent) of West Germans between the ages of 18 and 34, for example, support Germany participating in new NATO missions beyond border defense—precisely those West Germans who might conceivably participate in such operations, and who are also less burdened by German history. (See Figure 3.13.)

THE FUTURE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE

One of the most sensitive issues in the U.S.-German relationship is the future of the American military presence. During the Cold War, the U.S. military presence was the core of the Atlantic Alliance and the American security guarantee to the Federal Republic. During the negotiations over German unification, Washington and Bonn placed a high premium on ensuring that a reduced U.S. military presence remain in a unified Germany following the withdrawal of the troops of the former USSR.

German public support for the American military presence is, of course, an issue that has been closely monitored by governments and survey researchers in the past. With the winding down of the



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.13—Bundeswehr and New NATO Missions, by Generation

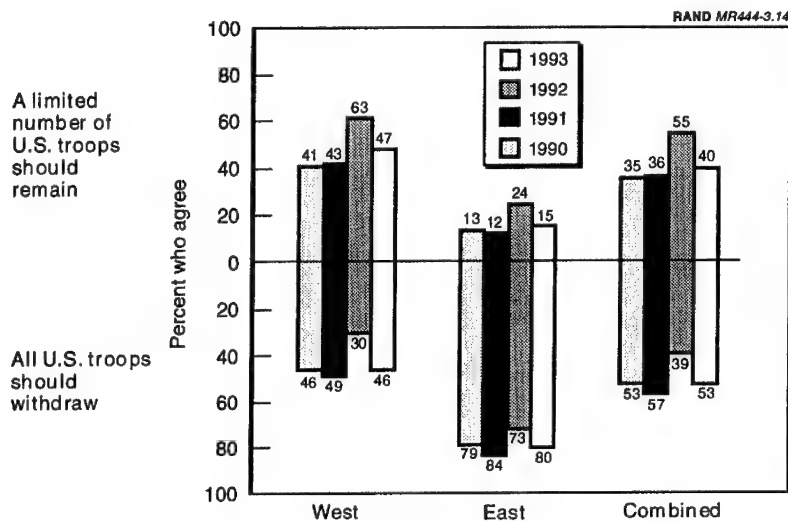
Cold War, however, the issue had so fundamentally changed that past public opinion trends had increasingly less significance in terms of projecting where future trends were moving. Although Washington and Bonn have continued to stress the importance of this presence, the key question already in 1990 was what rationale this presence would have in the eyes of the German public. And would the issue of the U.S. military presence appear in a somewhat different political light by 1994 when the final troops of the former USSR left German soil?

The RAND findings suggest that German public support for an ongoing American military presence is less stable. The old equation whereby positive attitudes toward the United States and NATO automatically translate into support for an American troop presence no longer necessarily holds. Since 1990, RAND has been asking the following question:

The Soviet Union/Russia is completely withdrawing its troops from a unified Germany. The United States, for its part, has announced that it is substantially reducing its presence. Are you of the opinion that the United States should retain a limited troop presence or should U.S. troops also be withdrawn?

The purpose of this question was to explicitly test whether a linkage between the U.S. and Soviet/Russian military presence existed in the mind of the German public, the niceties of German and allied diplomacy notwithstanding. Moreover, the question promised to provide a useful barometer to watch as the date for the final withdrawal of Russian troops from German soil approached in 1994. With the exception of 1992, a slim majority of Germans have supported a withdrawal of the American military presence. (See Figure 3.14.) In West Germany, support for the American military presence has been split and has fluctuated considerably. For example, in 1992 support for a limited American military presence jumped 19 percent—from 36 percent to 55 percent—only to fall 15 percent (to 40 percent) in 1993. An American military presence is overwhelmingly rejected by East Germans—regardless of political orientation or age group.

To be sure, questions concerning the future U.S. troop presence are sensitive to the precise wording of the question. As mentioned



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.14—German Attitudes Toward U.S. Troop Withdrawal

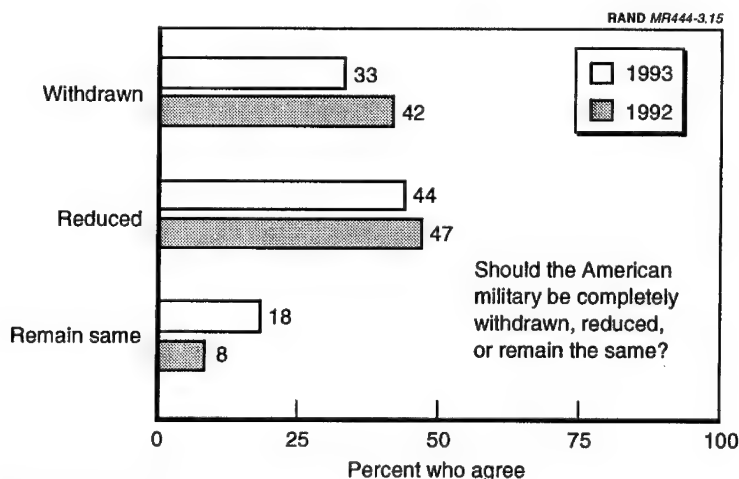
above, RAND's question was designed to test whether the German public does see a link between the American and Russian military presence, and whether German support for the U.S. military presence might diminish following the completion of the withdrawal of the troops of the former USSR—currently scheduled for the summer of 1994. Other questions asked by RAND, USIA, and German polling firms in recent years have produced more positive results.⁶

For example, in 1992 RAND also asked a second question regarding U.S. troop presence. Respondents were asked whether U.S. troop presence should remain at the then-planned Base Force level of 150,000 supported by the Bush Administration, whether it should be reduced further, or entirely withdrawn. One-quarter (24 percent) fa-

⁶For further details see Nancy J. Walker, "East and West Germans Still Differ in Their Views of the U.S.," *USIA Opinion Research Memorandum*, September 23, 1992; "Western Germans Continue to View NATO as Essential," *USIA Opinion Research Memorandum*, December 28, 1992; and "Western and Eastern Germans Still Differ on Many Security Issues," *USIA Opinion Research Memorandum*, June 22, 1993.

vored retaining a level of 150,000, slightly more than one-third (37 percent) were for further reductions and 32 percent opted for a complete withdrawal. Similarly, USIA has also asked the question in Germany whether the American military presence should be completely withdrawn, reduced, or remain the same. In March 1993, 18 percent of German respondents opted for maintaining the current level of troops, 44 percent preferred a reduced level, and only 33 percent wanted a complete withdrawal. The percentage of Germans who wanted to see levels remain the same actually rose from 8 percent in May 1992 to 18 percent in March 1993, perhaps because significant troop reductions had already taken place. (See Figure 3.15.)

Two patterns are nevertheless clear. In the East, there is a clear rejection of an American military presence; in West Germany, public opinion results vary considerably depending upon the question's wording and the year. Yet, not insignificant numbers of West Germans, too, prefer either additional reductions or a withdrawal of American troops. Data from the German survey research firm Al-lensbach show how West German attitudes have changed over time.

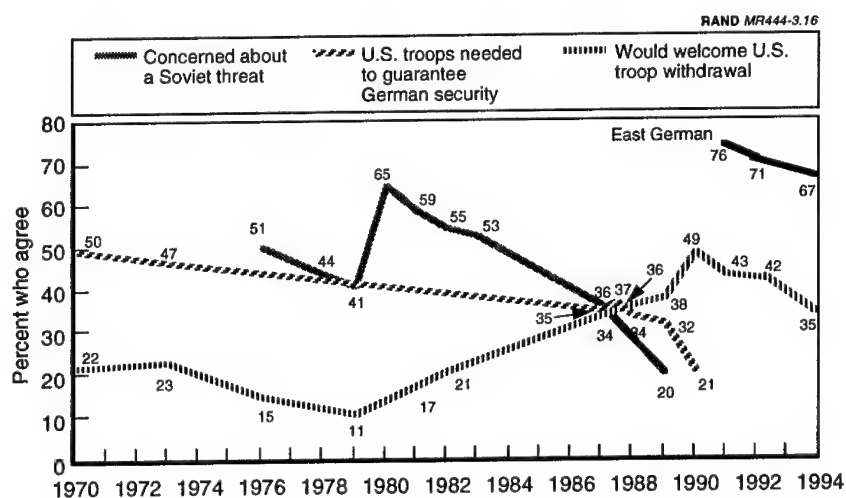


SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 3.15—German Attitudes Toward U.S. Military Presence

Since the 1950s, Allensbach has been asking respondents whether they would “welcome” or “regret” the news of the withdrawal of American troops from Germany. Figure 3.16 shows how the percentage of those who replied that they would “welcome” a U.S. withdrawal rose steadily in the course of the 1980s as perceptions of the Soviet threat declined. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, one out of two West Germans favored an American troop withdrawal. That number has since declined. Nonetheless, German attitudes remain split and ambiguous. Asked in February 1993 whether they would “welcome” or “regret” an American troop withdrawal, 35 percent of the respondents said they would greet the prospect, 35 percent said they would regret it, and 30 percent responded that they didn’t know. (See Figure 3.16.)

To be sure, the American military is unlikely to be thrown out of Germany in a wave of public protest. German politicians note that the issue of the U.S. presence has hardly been a public issue since unification and that the drawdown of the U.S. military has led many Germans to realize how much they benefited from the U.S. presence in economic terms as well. At the same time, one should not be



SOURCE: Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach.

Figure 3.16—Changing German Views Toward U.S. Troop Presence

In the immediate aftermath of German unification and the collapse of communism, the European Union loomed large as an institution seemingly destined to assume a crucial role in shaping Europe's future. With the continent's division overcome, Europe seemed on the verge of coming together and Germany seemed firmly placed on the side of those determined to seize the historical moment and push to accelerate European integration. Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher repeatedly underscored their commitment to a "Europeanized Germany" as opposed to a "Germanized Europe." Germany seemed to be reorienting itself toward Europe with some commentators suggesting that this was supported by the German public.¹

Several years later, it is clear that the collapse of communism and German unification have set off both centrifugal and centripetal forces within the EU. Germany is in the midst of these crosscutting currents for obvious reasons. It is both the country whose position and role in Europe have changed the most with the collapse of communism, as well as the country that historically has been the key political and financial motor behind European integration. Although Bonn's commitment to European integration and eventual European union have been part of Bonn's foreign policy ideology since the 1950s, a real public debate over Europe has not taken place in Germany for years if not decades.

¹Hans-Joachim Veen, "Die Westbindungen der Deutschen in einer Phase der Neuorientierung," *Europa Archiv*, 1991, pp. 31-40.

Indeed, it was the signing of the Maastricht Treaty that catalyzed this public debate and which unearthed a degree of public opposition to Maastricht that came as a rude shock to many in the German political class who had come to accept European unity as a kind of surrogate ideology. The German political class put on a show of unity by overwhelmingly voting for the Maastricht Treaty. Nevertheless the paradox of the current situation is that while the Maastricht Treaty has finally been ratified, the debate in Germany over the future of the EU is in many ways just starting. This, too, is a central factor in Germany's geopolitical maturation.

The RAND surveys focused on several specific questions regarding German public attitudes toward Europe. What type of vision does the German public have of the European Union? Should the EU be a supranational federal state, a looser federal structure, or even a confederation? Does German sympathy for France also translate into support for the traditional French vision of a small, coherent EU that would assume responsibility for its own security and defense relations and where NATO would be supplanted by a new European defense community, or do Germans favor a broadened European Union in conjunction with a transformed NATO? Finally, does the German public see the United States and Europe as future partners or competitors?

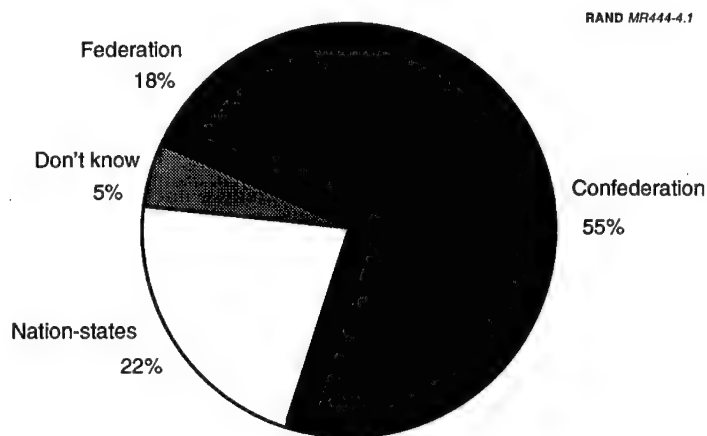
To be sure, these are complex and difficult issues that at times baffle even senior political leaders. It would, nevertheless, be a mistake to assume that the public either has no views or does not understand what is at stake. On the contrary, the postunification and post-Maastricht experience has demonstrated that the publics in Germany and elsewhere in the West do have strong views and that politicians ignore them only at their own peril. In short, the aim was to go beyond the traditional question of whether Germans support European integration in principle, and instead to try to get some sense of how the German public might set the EU's priorities and how this corresponds to official German policy.

THE GERMAN VISION OF EUROPE

What is Europe? How does the German public envision the future of the European Union—federation, confederation, or nation-states? The debate is an integral part of Germany's own history as well as

one that has plagued the European Community since it was founded. Figure 4.1 is taken from a poll conducted for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in the summer of 1989, i.e., shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall. It gives us a sense of how West Germans viewed the future of the European Community before the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. The question was designed to test West German preferences for the type of European Community they would favor—a federation, confederation, or a Europe of nation states. Slightly more than half (55 percent) opted for confederalism whereas only one out of five (18 percent) supported the notion of Europe as a federal state.²

How would a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty have fared in Germany? In 1992 and 1993, RAND asked German respondents how they would vote in a theoretical referendum. Roughly half of the German public supported the Maastricht Treaty with 30 percent opposed and one-fifth having no opinion. (See Table 4.1.) German



SOURCE: KAS 6/89.

Figure 4.1—German Attitudes Toward Europe's Future

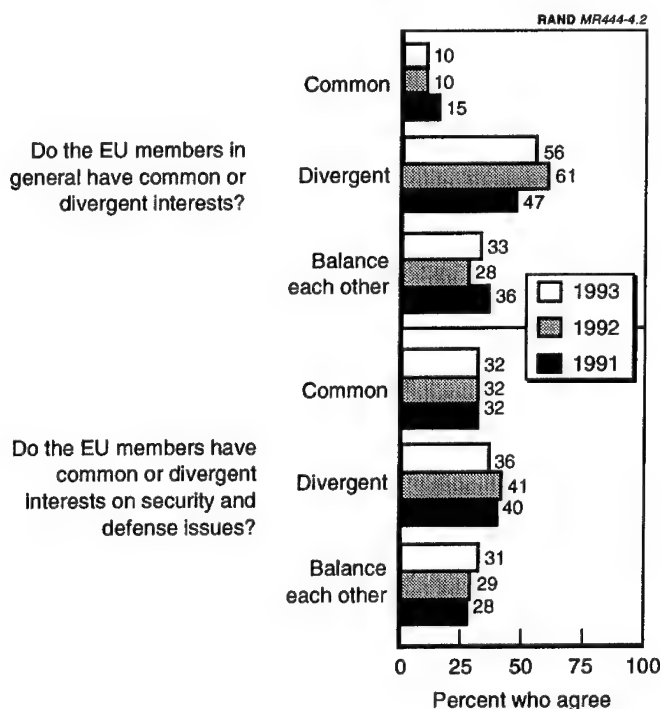
²For further details see Michael Wolffs and Stefan Beil, *Dokumentation: Deutsche Einheit, Nationalbewusstsein und Westbindung im Meinungsklima der Bevoelkerung*, Forschungsinstitut der Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, November 1991.

Table 4.1
A Theoretical Referendum on Maastricht

	1992	1993
For	47	49
Against	29	30
Don't know	23	21

Source: RAND.

skepticism over the degree of unity in the European Union is revealed in Figure 4.2. When asked whether the European Union countries in general have common or divergent interests, only 10 percent of German respondents believed that the European Union countries in general had “common interests” with over half (56 percent) believing they have “divergent” interests.

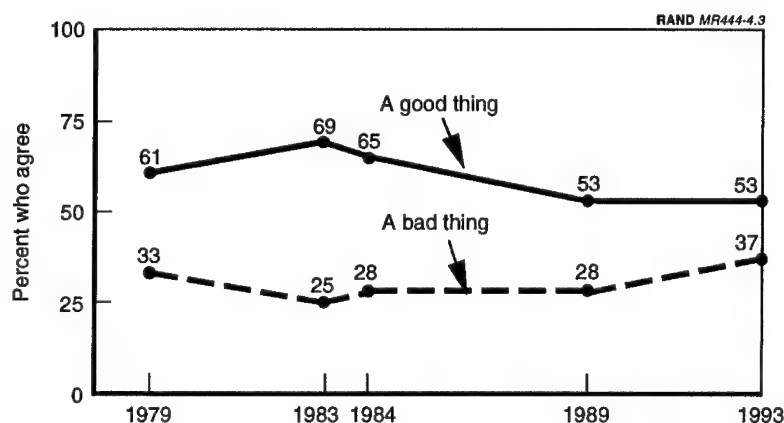


SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 4.2—German Doubts About EU Common Interests

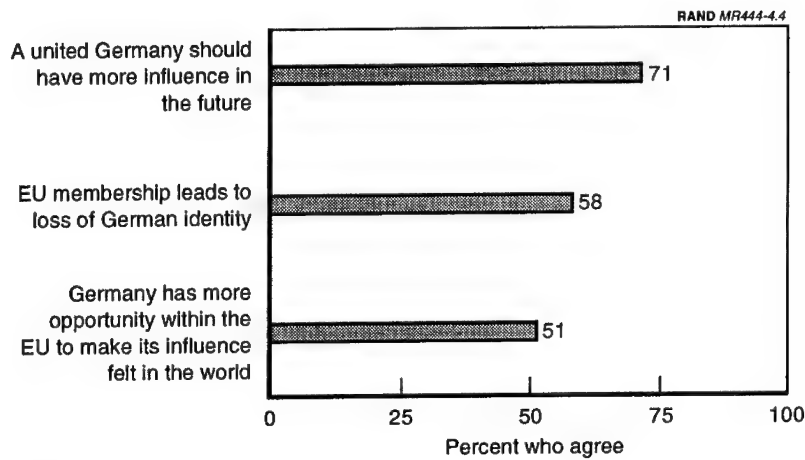
To be sure, Germans remain pro-European. Nevertheless, the erosion in German public support that has taken place for the European Union in general and for aspects of European integration in particular is reflected in Figure 4.3. West Germans were simply asked whether they thought that German membership in the European Union was a “good thing.” These figures document the fall in support in West Germany for European integration from the early 1980s to the early 1990s.

Moreover, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation polls also found a drop in the number of Germans who believed that European integration should be accelerated. Indeed, in June 1993, 35 percent believed integration should be slowed with 19 percent saying it should be accelerated. Seven out of ten Germans (71 percent) believed that a unified Germany should have more influence in the European Union in the future and nearly six out of ten (58 percent) feared that membership in the EU could lead to a loss of German identity. (See Figure 4.4.) When asked whether Bonn should push through its own interests in the EU or subordinate them to promote European unification, 72 percent supported a policy of pushing through German interests. (See Figure 4.5.)



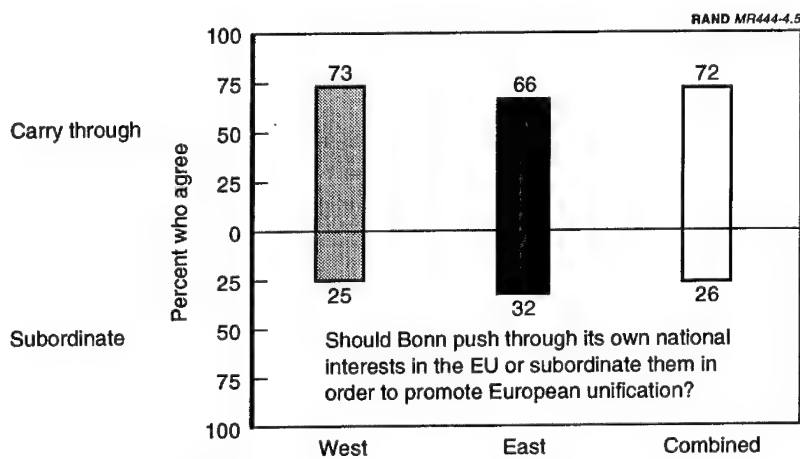
SOURCE: KAS.

Figure 4.3—Is EU Membership a Good Thing?
(Asked of West Germans Only)



SOURCE: KAS 6/93.

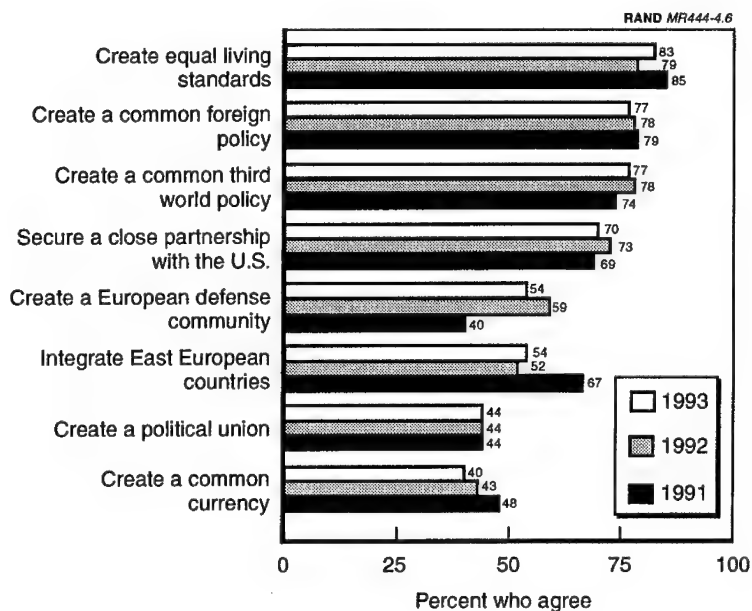
Figure 4.4—Desire for Greater German Influence in the EU



SOURCE: KAS 6/93.

Figure 4.5—Defending German Interests in the EU

The RAND surveys also asked Germans to assess the importance of a variety of tasks confronting the European Union. Significantly, less than a majority support either political or monetary union, with support for the latter steadily dropping over the last three years.³ If one considers the three core elements of the Maastricht Treaty—political union, economic and monetary union, and a common foreign policy—there is majority support only for the latter. (See Figure 4.6.) These results, above all the opposition to monetary union and a single currency, are consistent with the results of polling conducted by the USIA and other survey research firms in Germany.⁴



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 4.6—EU Priorities

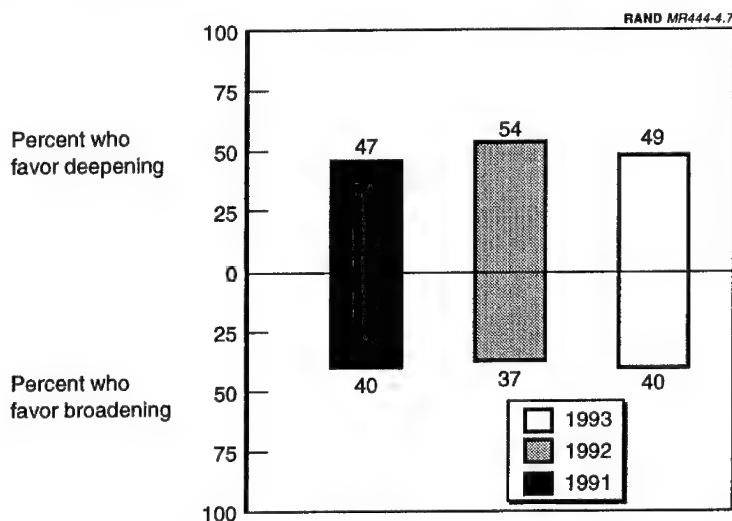
³The numbers are even more sobering when one takes a closer look at the intensity of the view. Respondents are allowed to choose between "very important" and "important" on the one hand, and "unimportant" and "totally unimportant" on the other. Some 28 percent of respondents considered monetary union "totally unimportant" and some 20 percent considered political union "totally unimportant"—by far the highest negatives for any of the EU's possible tasks.

⁴See, for example, Nancy J. Walker, "Germans Support Most Maastricht Goals But Want to Keep the D-Mark," *USIA Opinion Research Memorandum*, July 17, 1992.

Asked whether they would emphasize “deepening” or “broadening” within the EU, about half (49 percent) chose deepening—a slight drop from 54 percent last year. (See Figure 4.7.) Support for the broadening of the EU to include new members remains strong. This is especially true with regard to the EFTA countries, which enjoy over 80 percent approval. Among the countries of Eastern Europe, Hungary enjoys the highest support (64 percent) followed by the Czech Republic (50 percent) and Poland (42 percent). (See Figure 4.8.)

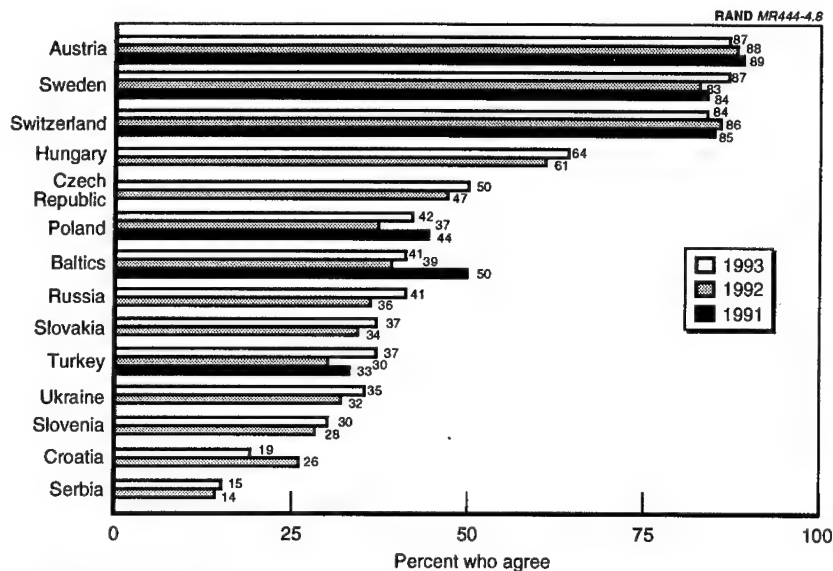
AMERICA AND EUROPE: PARTNERS OR COMPETITORS?

Finally, RAND has posed a number of questions over the past three years designed to test whether Germans viewed a strong EU as a future competitor or as a partner of the United States. The alternative visions presented to the respondents in the form of statements summarizing quotes taken from various European leaders and politicians were an attempt to capture different visions of Europe’s future as expressed by German, French, or British politicians.



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 4.7—German Preferences for Broadening or Deepening

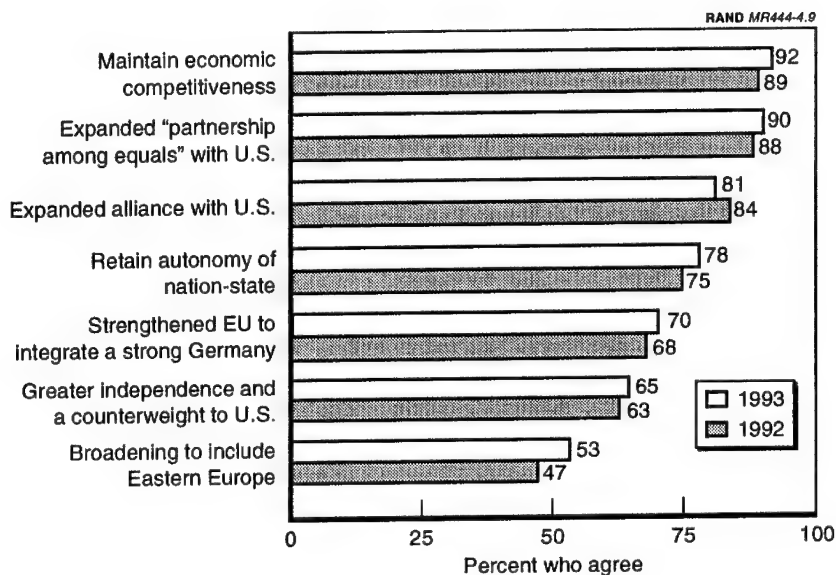


SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 4.8—Support for Expanding EU Membership to Various Countries

Perhaps the most striking result has been the clear evidence of the German public's desire for an ongoing and more balanced partnership between the United States and Europe. Asked how they view a number of differing "visions" for the EU, nine out of ten Germans favored the idea of a "partnership among equals," a phrase coined by Defense Minister Volker Ruehe, with eight out of ten (81 percent) backing the notion of an expanded alliance with the United States. (See Figure 4.9.)

One issue that has interested senior policymakers in Washington and Bonn in recent years has been the issue of an emerging European security identity. Specifically, the issue has been whether the emergence of such an identity would strengthen or weaken the Atlantic Alliance. USIA has for several decades posed a question asking Germans whether they would prefer to retain existing security arrangements based on NATO, form a European defense alliance, arrange a broader European security system including Russia, or avoid

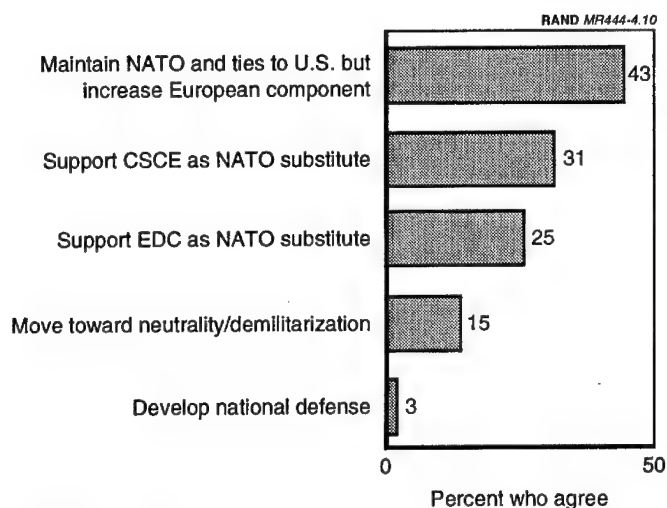


SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 4.9—Visions for the European Union

alliances altogether and adopt a position of neutrality.⁵ Only a few select a European-only defense force as the primary security arrangement for Germany, suggesting that support for European defense should not, in the eyes of the German public, come at NATO's expense. A RAND question posed in 1992 went further. It asked Germans what their alliance preference would be in the case of a complete U.S. withdrawal from Europe. The top preference was still to maintain NATO. (See Figure 4.10.) However, substantial differences existed between West and East German attitudes. Whereas one-half (48 percent) of West Germans opted for NATO, only 23 percent of East Germans did. In contrast, 40 percent of East Germans opted for the CSCE option compared to 29 percent of West Germans.

⁵See, for example, Walker, "Western and Eastern Germans Still Differ," op. cit.



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 4.10—How Europe Should Respond to Possible U.S. Troop Withdrawal

To be sure, Germans have not turned against European integration as such. Chancellor Kohl, as well as other leading politicians across the spectrum, have mounted a vigorous defense of both Maastricht and European Union. The Chancellor repeatedly warns his countrymen that Germany has a special interest in and responsibility for Europe and that German economic prosperity is intimately linked to European integration. Yet, the Maastricht debate did catalyze a new wave of criticism which does show up in public opinion and which is having a political effect. Before the Bundestag vote on Maastricht, the mainstream political parties were forced to go back, in part, on their commitment to a supranational Europe.⁶

⁶In October 1992, the CDU abandoned its commitment to the creation of a "European federal state" that it had adopted at its party congress in 1988, claiming that the future Europe was neither a federation nor a confederation but something new and different. Several days before the Maastricht vote in the Bundestag, SPD Party Chairman Hans-Ulrich Klose also confirmed that the nation-state would not disappear as a result of European integration. One commentator, therefore, concluded that "practically unnoticed one of the most influential pillars of post-war German policy has suffered a decisive defeat. . . . What has made the situation so strange is that not a single faction

Resistance to European Union *has* grown in Germany. Whether this is a short-term trend related to the problems spawned by unification and recession or indicative of a longer-term trend remains to be seen. Germans remain pro-European, but there are growing doubts as to whether current plans are both feasible and desirable in the sense that they really correspond to “German interests.” There is a sense within the German public that German EU policy is somehow not “German” enough, that Bonn does not assertively pursue “German interests,” and that it is “exploited” by its EU allies. The conclusion drawn is not that Germany should abandon the EU, but that it should strive for a “better bargain” and be tenacious in defending its national interests vis-à-vis its EU partners. This, too, is part of Germany’s geopolitical maturation.

in the Bundestag wanted to vote against the treaty, with the result that one seemed to be fighting against a silent opposition. Nonetheless, the impression left was that there are massive reservations against European union (and not only EMU), reservations so dominant that both parties were forced to clarify their positions as to the future character of European integration.” See Karlheinz Weissmann, “Wiederkehr eines Totgesagten: Der Nationalstaat am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts,” *Das Parlament*, Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, B14/93, April 2, 1993.

GERMANY'S FUTURE WORLD ROLE

One of the most contentious issues in the new German foreign policy debate is how a unified Germany should define its international role, including the question whether German armed forces should participate in collective security actions—be they conducted under the auspices of the United Nations, NATO, or a future European Defense Community. The debate has revolved around what German Defense Minister Volker Ruehe has termed Germany's "culture of reticence"—i.e., German reluctance to use force for any purpose other than national self-defense.

This dispute is but the tip of the iceberg in a broader debate over what constitutes a "normal" German foreign policy and what lessons should be drawn from German history, how to define German vital interests in the post-Cold War world, as well as the relevance of military power in a post-Cold War world. For some, Germany's "culture of reticence" is a positive good, a badge that Germans should wear with pride as proof that they have learned the lessons of history and approach questions of the use of force with skepticism. For others, however, Germany's "culture of reticence" reflects a certain German selfishness and an unwillingness to live up to the meaning and obligations of collective defense and collective security, and a sign that Germany remains a flawed and wounded nation when it comes to questions of war and peace despite more than 40 years of successful postwar democracy.

This issue has also become increasingly divisive in German politics. It has led to a series of political maneuvers and conflicting legal claims over how to interpret the German constitution that are cur-

rently under review by the German Supreme Court. The current German government has argued that a sovereign and unified Germany can no longer limit its military role to national self-defense as this would undercut German interests and contradict Germany's international and alliance responsibilities. By limiting the future role of the German armed forces, it insists, Bonn would be unable to live up to its obligations in the United Nations and would block any future reform of NATO as well as the ability of the EU to eventually establish a common security and defense policy. There are also differences within the ruling coalition as the CDU/CSU has insisted that the participation of German armed forces in new missions is already covered by the Basic Law, with the Free Democrats supporting the principle but insisting that the constitution needs to be "clarified" first before such participation can take place.

What the government considers an essential step in the "normalization" of German foreign policy, however, is considered a "remilitarization" of German policy by many critics, especially in the Social Democratic opposition. The SPD has sought to limit the future participation of German armed forces in so-called "out-of-area" scenarios to peacekeeping missions, arguing that Germany has a special responsibility to refrain from military actions because of its own militaristic past. For all participants in this debate, however, the issue of what the German public will or will not support has become a first-order political issue.

NATIONAL SELF-CONFIDENCE

From the outset, a top priority of the RAND surveys has been to address the underlying issues in the debate over Germany's future world role. The issue is, of course, far more complex than simply asking Germans whether they would be willing to wage war in pursuit of any objective. Whether Germans support the use of the Bundeswehr to obtain any objective is part of a broader equation that includes questions of national self-confidence, perceptions of vital interests and, last but not least, whether force is the legitimate and only means to effectively achieve a political goal.

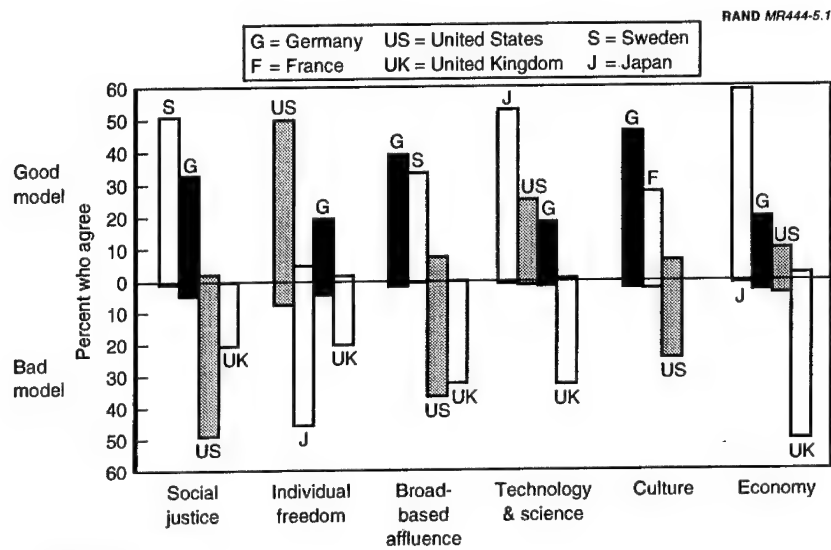
Past studies conducted both for the German government and by USIA had shown that Germans—both West and East—were willing to use force to defend their own country.¹ In short, Germans are not pacifistic and do not reject the use of military force for at least certain purposes, e.g., national defense. The key question, however, was whether public support exists for the use of force for any other political purposes and, if so, which ones. From the outset of these surveys, it was clear that Germans were only slowly starting to confront such issues. Nowhere were the political taboos greater and the shadow of German history darker than when it came to the question of the use of military force, including the use of German armed forces.

The RAND surveys, therefore, focused on more basic “building block” issues that inevitably form the foundation upon which any national military strategy is built. The RAND questions ranged from issues such as whether Germans had national self-confidence and considered themselves capable of playing a leadership role in foreign and defense policy, to whether the use of force and military intervention were legitimate policy tools, and, if so, whether German armed forces should participate in new military missions.

One important finding of the RAND studies is the fact that the German public does have a clear sense of national self-confidence. It considers Germany well equipped to assume a leadership role, and is, in principle, willing to assume greater international responsibility. For example, early on RAND asked survey respondents to rate different countries in terms of whether they represented a good or bad model in different categories having to do with political, economic, and societal performance.

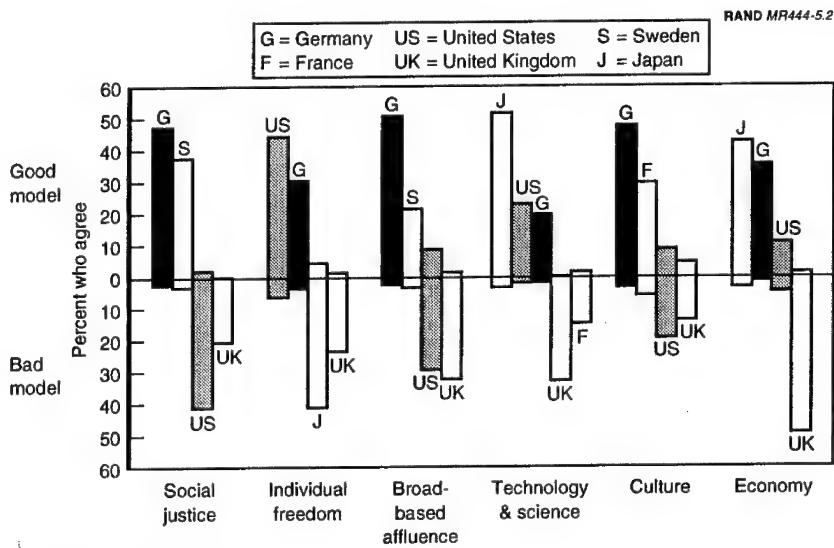
The results from the 1991 and 1993 surveys are contained in Figures 5.1 and 5.2. Germans rate the United States as the best model when it comes to individual freedom but very poorly when it comes to social justice. Germany's close ally, France, hardly appears as a model except in the realm of culture where it is seen as lagging behind Germany. The United Kingdom rates poorly almost across the

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SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.1—Rating Societal Performance, 1993

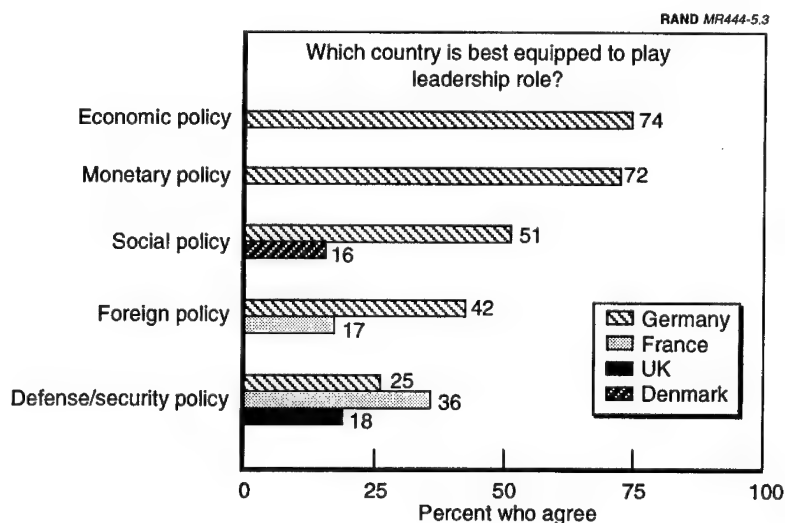


SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.2—Rating Societal Performance, 1991

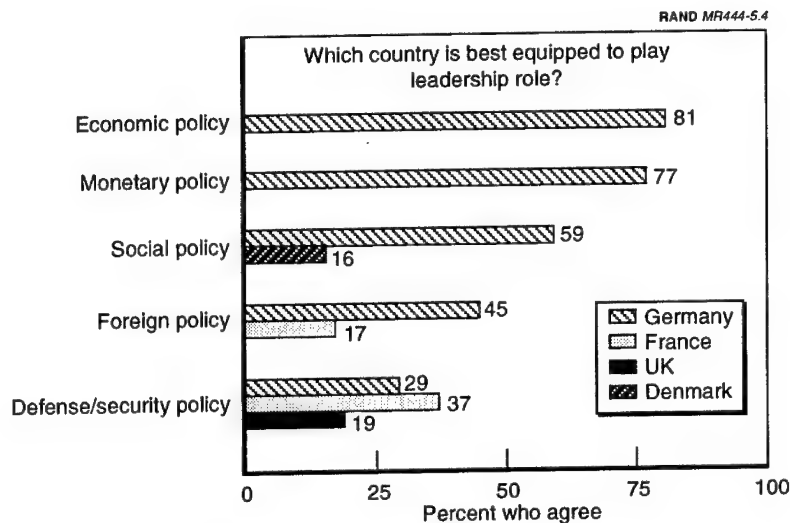
board. In 1991 respondents rated Germany as the best or second-best model in almost every category. By 1993, however, Germany's own social and economic problems had started to tarnish the German public perception of Germany's strength and attractiveness somewhat. Nevertheless, these figures do suggest that Germans have a robust sense of national self-confidence.

This sense of national self-confidence is not only limited to domestic policy, however. It extends to foreign policy. Asked in late 1993 which countries were best equipped to play a leadership role in the EU in a number of different areas, solid majorities chose Germany for leadership in the areas of economic policy (74 percent), monetary policy (72 percent), and social policy (51 percent). A plurality also believed Germany best equipped to lead in terms of foreign policy (42 percent). It was only in the realm of defense and security policy that a significant portion of the German public is willing to grant France a leadership role. (See Figure 5.3.) These numbers were slightly lower than in 1992. (See Figure 5.4.)



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.3—Leadership in the EU, 1993



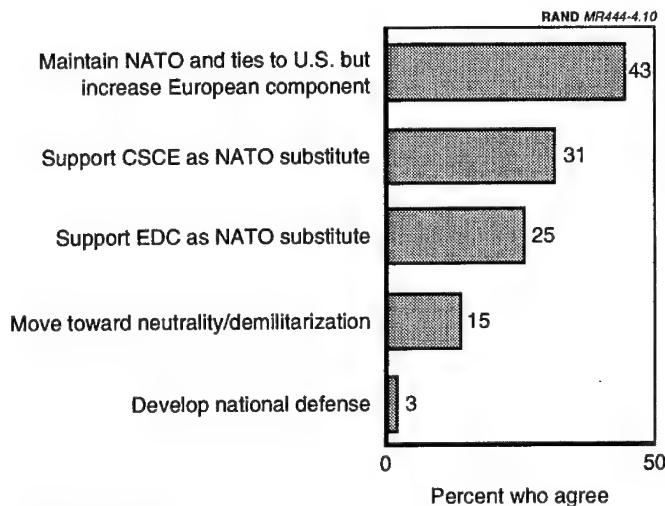
SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.4—Leadership in the EU, 1992

Finally, RAND asked the specific question whether Germany's past should prevent it from playing a more active international role. RAND's question presented two opposing views and asked respondents to choose. The first view was that Germany should, because of its past history and pursuit of power politics, continue to adopt a reserved stance in world politics. The second was that a unified Germany must now assume a more active role and take on more international responsibility. Since 1990, more than half of German respondents have supported the view that Germany should assume more responsibility and assume a more active international role. (See Figure 5.5.)

INTERNATIONAL RETICENCE

The RAND survey results also revealed several contrasts. One of the most striking contrasts was between a Germany whose citizens displayed considerable self-confidence regarding Germany's accomplishments, were also convinced of Germany's leadership skills in a variety of areas, and were willing to assume more international responsibility in principle, on the one hand, and a Germany whose



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 4.10—How Europe Should Respond to Possible U.S. Troop Withdrawal

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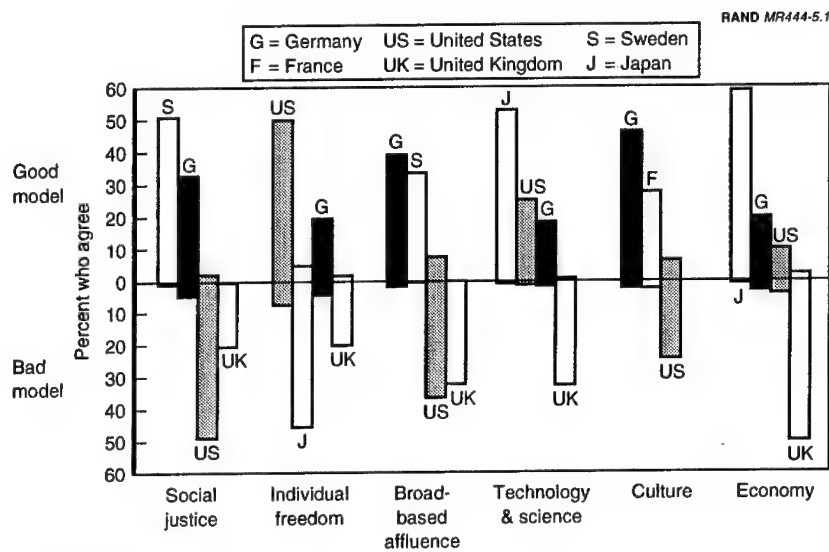
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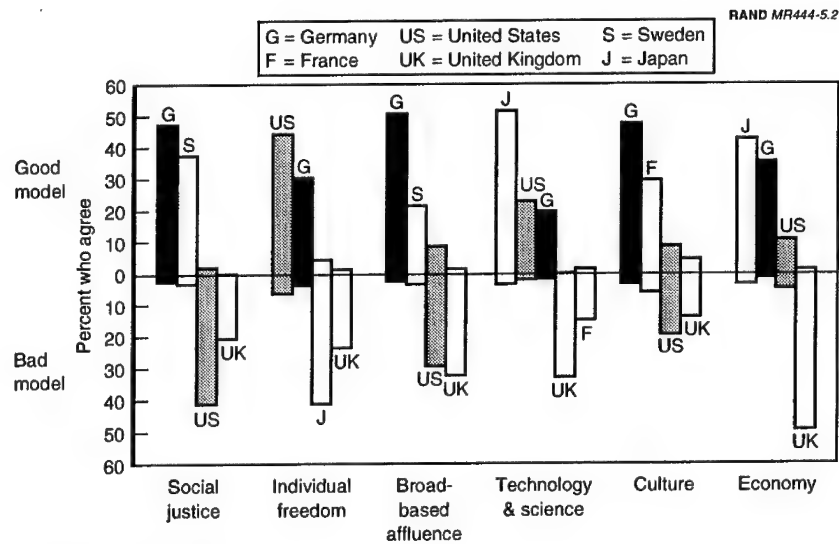
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SOURCE: RAND.

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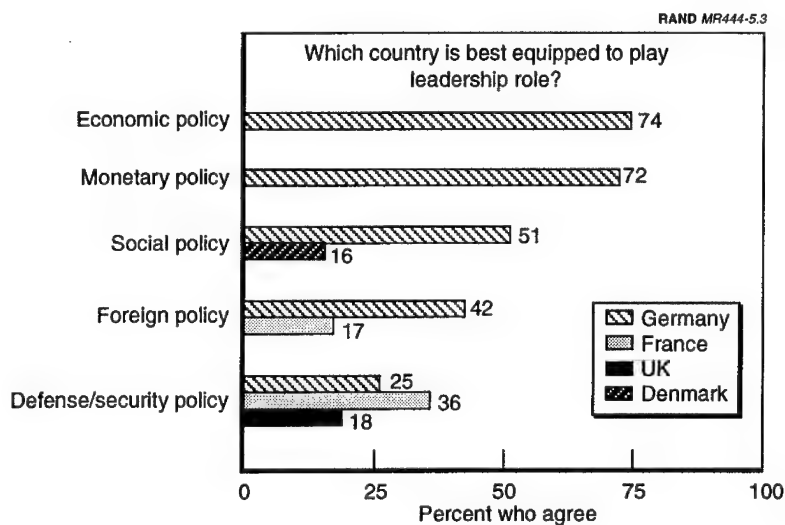


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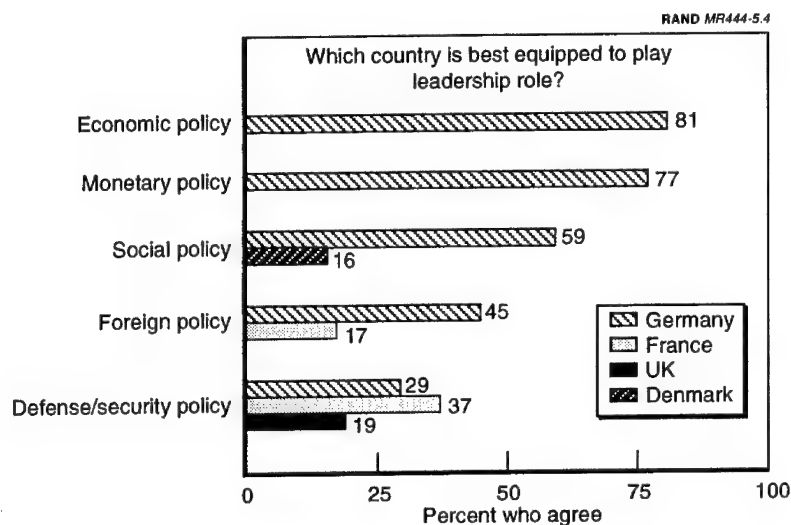
board. In 1991 respondents rated Germany as the best or second-best model in almost every category. By 1993, however, Germany's own social and economic problems had started to tarnish the German public perception of Germany's strength and attractiveness somewhat. Nevertheless, these figures do suggest that Germans have a robust sense of national self-confidence.

This sense of national self-confidence is not only limited to domestic policy, however. It extends to foreign policy. Asked in late 1993 which countries were best equipped to play a leadership role in the EU in a number of different areas, solid majorities chose Germany for leadership in the areas of economic policy (74 percent), monetary policy (72 percent), and social policy (51 percent). A plurality also believed Germany best equipped to lead in terms of foreign policy (42 percent). It was only in the realm of defense and security policy that a significant portion of the German public is willing to grant France a leadership role. (See Figure 5.3.) These numbers were slightly lower than in 1992. (See Figure 5.4.)



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.3—Leadership in the EU, 1993



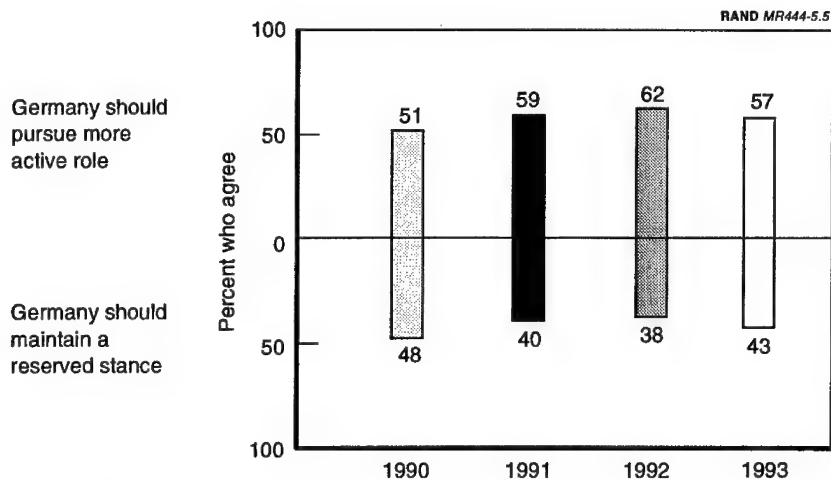
SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.4—Leadership in the EU, 1992

Finally, RAND asked the specific question whether Germany's past should prevent it from playing a more active international role. RAND's question presented two opposing views and asked respondents to choose. The first view was that Germany should, because of its past history and pursuit of power politics, continue to adopt a reserved stance in world politics. The second was that a unified Germany must now assume a more active role and take on more international responsibility. Since 1990, more than half of German respondents have supported the view that Germany should assume more responsibility and assume a more active international role. (See Figure 5.5.)

INTERNATIONAL RETICENCE

The RAND survey results also revealed several contrasts. One of the most striking contrasts was between a Germany whose citizens displayed considerable self-confidence regarding Germany's accomplishments, were also convinced of Germany's leadership skills in a variety of areas, and were willing to assume more international responsibility in principle, on the one hand, and a Germany whose



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.5—German Attitudes Toward a More Active International Role

citizens shied away from any German role in future military actions, on the other. The notion of a tacit division of labor whereby Germany assumed greater responsibility, but refrained from involvement in new military missions, was even more explicit in some of the focus group discussions designed to test possible themes and questions. As one West German student participant remarked in a focus group discussion conducted in the summer of 1990 when asked about the contrast between a Germany willing to assume new responsibility and leadership, but unwilling to become more involved in new military missions: "War—that is something we leave to the Americans."

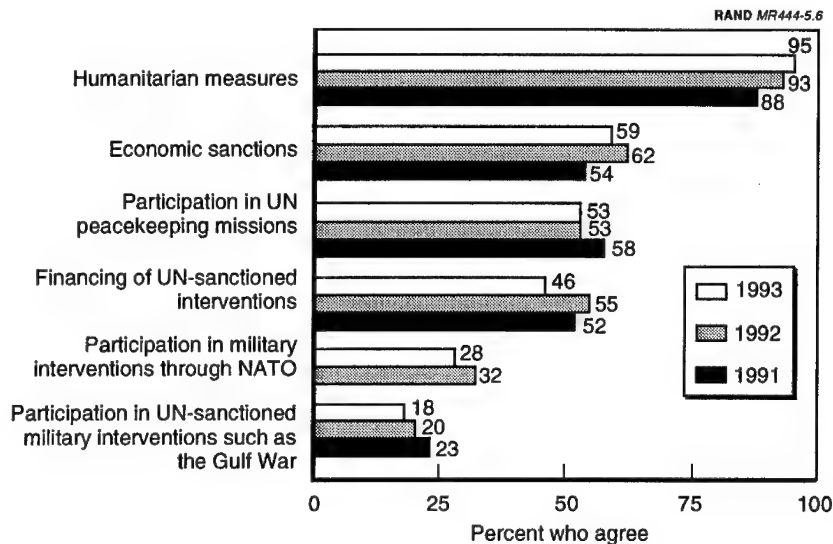
Such a statement comes as a shock to Americans who have viewed Germany as a close partner in an Atlantic Alliance ostensibly committed to collectively defending common interests and values. Such remarks are comprehensible only when put into the context of a country where many believed that Germany was not expected to and should not even think about engaging in any military activity other than self-defense. To be sure, German leaders at times presented the issue in this fashion for their own tactical reasons. The issue of German troops participating in UN peacekeeping missions, for example,

did not arise until the early 1970s. Then-Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher chose to interpret the German Basic Law as prohibiting the German armed forces from participating in such missions for several reasons, one being Germany's division.

It nevertheless rapidly became what former Foreign Minister Genscher called German "state practice" not to allow Bundeswehr troops to participate in missions beyond territorial defense. Many Germans only realized that Bundeswehr troops were committed to deploy to assist other NATO countries during the Gulf War when an argument broke out among German politicians as to whether German troops should participate in a NATO deployment to Turkey. Indeed, it was only with the passing of the new Bundeswehr law in February 1992 that the Bundeswehr received an official mandate extending its missions beyond territorial defense to include so-called "in-area" conflicts in line with the new focus of NATO missions embraced at the NATO Rome summit—i.e., Bundeswehr participation in operations beyond Germany but still within the NATO treaty area. Since then, the debate has focused on whether the German armed forces should also participate in operations beyond the NATO area—so-called "out-of-area" conflicts. That there has been a dramatic shift in the expectations of Germany's neighbors and allies and that today many see future German participation in collective security actions as *the* litmus test of German reliability are facts that are only starting to dawn upon many in the German debate.²

The RAND findings clearly confirmed the existence of a political and psychological hurdle the German public had to overcome when contemplating possible Bundeswehr participation in operations other than the defense of Germany. This "culture of reticence" is reflected in Figure 5.6. Survey respondents were asked how Germany should implement its new international responsibilities and were presented with a series of options that de facto constituted a spectrum of options ranging from soft to "hard" security, e.g., participation in combat operations such as the Gulf War. In 1993, a

²To be sure, the views of Germany's neighbors and allies at times remain ambivalent on this issue. Nonetheless, there clearly has been a shift. For the American case see Ronald D. Asmus, *Germany in the Eyes of the American Security Elite* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, P-7810, 1993).



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.6—German Attitudes Toward Military and Nonmilitary Missions

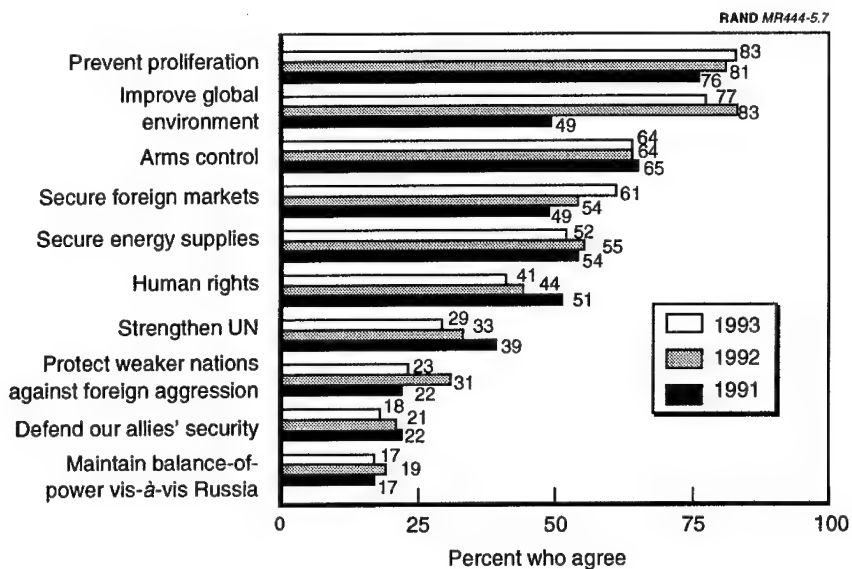
strong majority supported German involvement in humanitarian missions as well as economic and financial assistance. However, whereas half (53 percent) back German Bundeswehr participation in peacekeeping operations, only one-quarter (28 percent) favor German military participation in NATO operations outside of Germany, and only 18 percent support German forces participating in UN-sponsored operations such as Desert Storm. (See Figure 5.6.)

Another question RAND posed, again borrowing from the Gallup polls conducted for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, concerned a hierarchy of a country's foreign policy goals. Figure 5.7 shows how the German public prioritizes these goals. The list is headed by a number of "soft" security objectives, e.g., nonproliferation (83 percent), improving the global environment (77 percent) and arms control (64 percent). One should also note the increased importance attached to securing foreign markets (61 percent)—a reflection of economic harder times in Germany—as well as the clear drop in public support for the UN. The latter reflects the problems the United Nations has had in conflicts such as the former Yugoslavia and Somalia.

Of special importance for our purposes is the fact that goals such as “protect weaker nations against aggression” or “defend our allies’ security” rate low on the German list—much lower than the Chicago Council studies have shown to be the case for the United States. For example, whereas the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations’ poll from December 1990 found that 61 percent of Americans consider “defending our allies’ security” a “very important” American foreign policy goal, in 1993 only one out of five Germans (18 percent) said that this was a “very important” goal for Germany. Similarly, only one out of four Germans (23 percent) viewed “protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression” as a “very important” German foreign policy goal in comparison to nearly six out of ten Americans (57 percent) who saw this as a “very important” American foreign policy goal.

The reason is simple and underscores the German dilemma. Having fought two world wars in Europe this century, the United States has learned the hard way that American national security interests are affected by developments far from its borders, and that it is at times necessary to fight for certain principles and to defend allies and threatened countries. Germany has little tradition of this kind. A number of senior German military leaders have called this the German Bundeswehr’s “missing tradition.” Although repeated studies have shown that Germans—West and East—are prepared to defend their own country, the problem sets in when it comes to defending other countries. German military leaders see this narrow German view of collective defense rooted in the belief that NATO existed to defend them, not that they were in NATO to come to the defense of others.

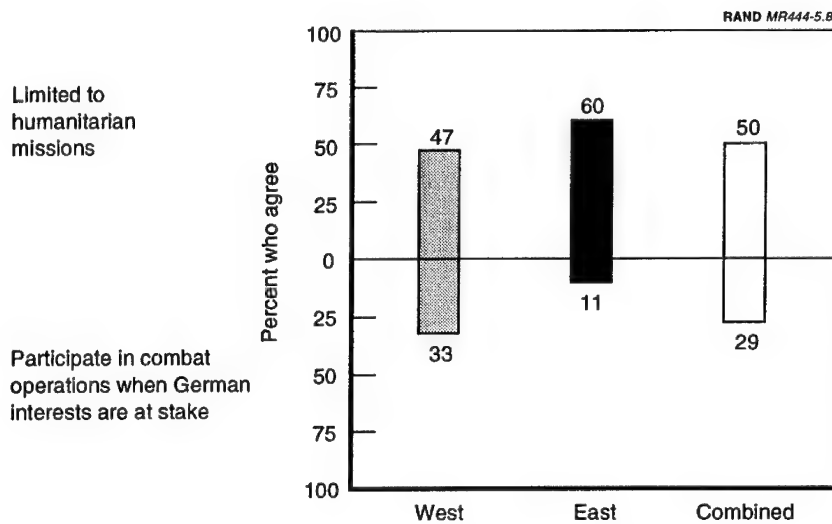
These findings confirm the existence of a political and psychological hurdle in the German public when it comes to participation in future military missions. The key question in German politics is how difficult this hurdle will be to overcome. Does it constitute an insurmountable obstacle with the “culture of reticence” deeply entrenched in postwar German culture, or is this something that will fade with time and generational change? Do different institutions make a difference? Would the public be more inclined to support German participation in a future military action if it were conducted through the UN or NATO?



SOURCE: RAND.

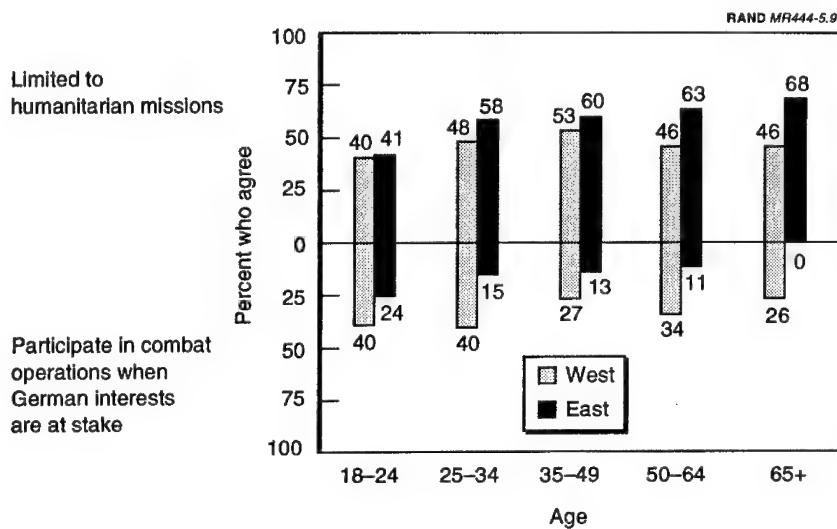
Figure 5.7—German Foreign Policy Goals

RAND posed several questions about German participation in combat operations under both UN and NATO auspices. Asked specifically whether Bundeswehr participation in UN missions should exclude combat operations and remain limited to humanitarian purposes, or whether Germany should also be able to participate in combat operations when German interests were at stake, less than one-third (29 percent) supported participation in combat operations, with one-half (50 percent) supporting limited Bundeswehr missions for humanitarian purposes. As discussed earlier, support for German armed forces participating in "out-of-area" operations under NATO auspices was higher, albeit still a minority. (See Figure 5.8.) Again, on a more positive note, support for Germany assuming the same rights and responsibilities as other nations in the UN is highest among the younger generations in Western Germany. Forty percent of West Germans between the ages of 18 and 34, for example, support Germany participating in UN combat operations when German interests are at stake. (See Figure 5.9.)



SOURCE: RAND.

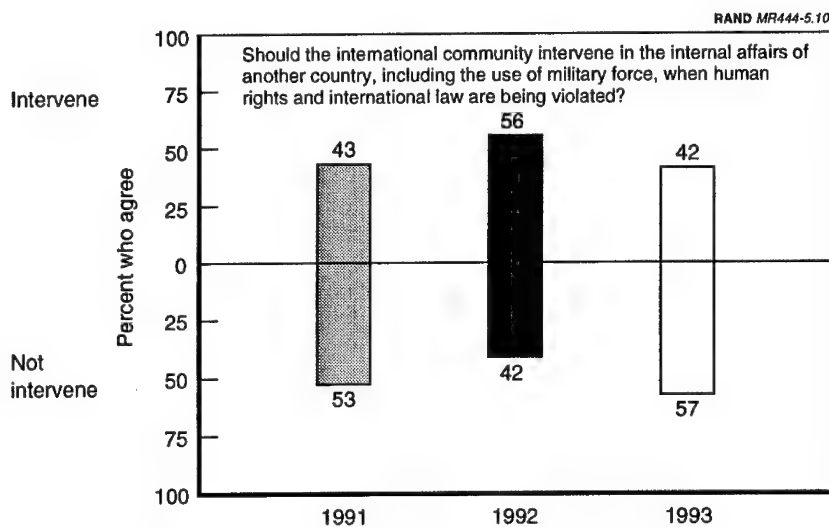
Figure 5.8—Bundeswehr and UN Missions



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.9—Bundeswehr and UN Missions, by Generation

One additional question posed in the RAND surveys concerned the ethics of the use of force—i.e., the question of whether it was legitimate, in principle, for the international community to use force to interfere in the internal affairs of another country when international law and human rights were being violated. In 1992, support for the principle of intervention jumped some 13 percentage points with 56 percent of Germans supporting the right to intervene in the internal affairs of another country. This jump was perhaps attributable to the outrage in Germany over the war in former Yugoslavia. By 1993, however, support had again dropped, perhaps because of frustration over the failures in Bosnia and Somalia and seeing how limited military force can be in effectively resolving these conflicts. (See Figure 5.10.)



SOURCE: RAND.

Figure 5.10—Attitudes Toward Military Intervention

THE EAST GERMAN FACTOR

Three years after German unification, major differences persist in West and East German attitudes on a variety of issues. Nowhere is this more clear than with regard to security policy issues. What is most striking is the large and persistent East German majority that opposed anything connected with the military—be it a U.S. troop presence, the principle of military intervention in defense of human rights, or a possible role for the Bundeswehr—whether under the auspices of the UN or new NATO missions. The consistent East German majority opposed to these aspects of security policy is all the more striking in light of the fact that West German views are often split right down the middle—with the East German factor, therefore, tipping the scales in terms of overall German majority views on some core issues.

The East German factor is, in part, attributable to the militarization of East German society under Soviet communist occupation.³ East Germans constitute only 20 percent of German society. Their views on such issues should also not be exaggerated, since West German policymakers often dominate the public debate on such issues. Neither should their influence be dismissed as negligible, however. Initial hopes that East German attitudes would gradually be “West Germanized” have not necessarily borne fruit. Germany’s “culture of reticence” is a special problem in the new eastern states. Germany will not reach a new consensus on these issues unless East Germans are also part of that consensus.

³For a more in-depth discussion of the East German factor see Asmus, *German Perceptions of the United States at Unification*, op. cit.

The data from the RAND surveys capture a country in transition—one where past domestic and foreign policy priorities are being reexamined in light of new and radically different circumstances. Europe and Germany are caught between two ages. The Cold War is over, yet the outlines of the post-Cold War era remain uncertain. For Germany in particular, the end of the Cold War and unification has forced Germans to rethink basic assumptions that have guided both domestic and foreign policy for decades. A stable equilibrium point with regard to how Germans define their future role in Europe has not yet been reached. Many of the numbers presented here may change in the years ahead as Germans continue to come to terms with the dramatic changes taking place in and around their country.

Looking back over the results of the RAND surveys since 1990, one can see both elements of the passing of the old Cold War consensus in Germany as well as elements of a possible new consensus. First, Germany's strategic orientation remains unequivocally pro-Western. There is currently no desire among the German public for a strategy of "going it alone" or for some neutralist *Sonderweg*. Speculation that emerged in the initial wake of unification that Germany would gradually drift in the direction of neutrality once the constraints of the Cold War had been loosened have thus far been proven wrong.

Second, sympathy for the United States is on the rise in a unified Germany. It remains high among younger West Germans and is increasing in the East as past negative views of America start to break down there. Public support for maintaining a strong strategic bond to the United States in the post-Cold War period has remained solid.

Public support for NATO, which had declined in the late 1980s, has steadily increased since German unification. Nine out of ten Germans expect the United States to remain an important ally.

Germans also remain committed to Europe and European integration. Support for a further deepening of integration as envisioned in the Maastricht Treaty remains weak, however. Less than a majority support either political or monetary union, with support for the latter steadily dropping over the last three years. If one considers the three core elements of the Maastricht Treaty—political union, economic and monetary union, and a common foreign policy—there is majority support only for the latter.

Germans support a strong EU as a stepping stone to a new partnership between the United States and Europe. There is no desire for a new European defense identity that would exclude the United States. The German public does, however, desire a more balanced relationship between the United States and Europe. For example, eight out of ten Germans back the notion of a new “partnership among equals” between the United States and Europe.

At the same time, German public support for the U.S. military presence is less stable. As the withdrawal of the troops of the former USSR from eastern Germany nears completion, the issue of the future rationale and purpose of the U.S. presence is likely to become an issue in German politics. The danger is not that there will be a surge of political pressure for the U.S. military to leave Germany. Rather, it is that the lack of a clear rationale in either country for sustaining the U.S. military presence will lead to the step-by-step erosion in support for a relationship that nearly everyone agrees is crucial for European stability.

The underlying issue, of course, is not whether the German public does or does not like NATO, but rather what it expects the alliance, including the U.S. military presence, to actually do in the future. In short, the issue is that of function or purpose and whether NATO and the U.S. military presence are relevant—and are seen by the German public as such—to the new security problems emerging in and around Europe. Until that rationale is clarified and understood by the public on both sides of the Atlantic, support for maintaining a

U.S. presence will be unstable—both in Germany and the United States.

Germans are becoming more aware of their interests in and the future risks to German security that could emanate from crises originating beyond their borders—e.g., Eastern Europe, Russia, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. A shift in German priorities is evident. Germans single out Eastern Europe as one of the most important foreign policy issues facing the country. Similarly, Eastern Europe and Russia top the list of Germany's "vital interests," replacing France. Moreover, when asked to identify the greatest "critical threats" to Germany's "vital interests" in the years ahead, Germans name threats in the East—the spread of nationalism, nuclear proliferation, ethnic and regional conflict, and emigration.

This growing public recognition of Germany's interest in the East might be termed Germany's new "Zwang nach Osten." It does not reflect any aggressive German intent, but rather a defensive and pragmatic realization that Germany is most vulnerable to the rise of nationalism and instability on its eastern borders. Although Germany was, in many ways, the greatest beneficiary of the collapse of communism, it could also end up being one of the greatest losers in the post-Cold War world should new instability arise in the East and spread to the West. This translates into German support for the expansion of the EU as well as of NATO.

The prospect of growing German "assertiveness" has raised concerns in some circles, but the RAND results suggest that such self-confidence or assertiveness has heretofore been channeled into known institutions such as NATO and the EU. At the same time, the future risks to German security all lie beyond the traditional EU and NATO realm—e.g., Eastern Europe, Russia, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Germans are becoming more aware of their interests in such regions and of possible threats to them. Their initial instinct is to turn to the institutions of Western security that have worked for them in the past, above all to NATO, to manage such problems.

Nowhere are the contradictions in German public opinion more apparent, however, than when it comes to the future German role in addressing new strategic challenges. The RAND surveys clearly doc-

ument Germany's "culture of reticence." Although Germans in principle support, for example, NATO responding to new out-of-area conflicts or expanding eastward, such support drops when it comes to the Bundeswehr actually participating in such missions. On a more positive note, support for Germany assuming the same obligations as other NATO nations is highest among the younger generations in Western Germany—precisely those West Germans who might conceivably participate in such operations, and who are also less burdened by German history.

Looking back over the last four years, it is clear that many of the building blocks for a new consensus on security policy may already be in place. This new consensus, however, has not yet come together—in large part because of the lack of leadership and consensus in the political class. Despite repeated calls for a new national debate on foreign and security policy since German unification and the Gulf War—the kind of debate that could clarify German national interests and priorities and help forge a new national consensus—the political class has by and large shied away from such a debate. Although "public opinion" is often cited as a major reason why Germany can not confront these issues, what is most striking is how commonsensically German public opinion has evolved on many of these issues explored. In some cases, it may even be ahead of the political class

Although debate over Germany's national interests remains largely taboo for fear that it would send the wrong political signals, such a debate may be the only way for the country to reach closure around a new understanding of German national priorities and strategy. Germany's ability—or lack thereof—to reach closure on these issues will determine whether German policy can successfully meet the new challenges of the post-Cold War era. Germany can either be a catalyst for positive change, the kind of change that will lead to a more stable Europe, or it can end up blocking efforts to revitalize both the EU and the Atlantic Alliance.

This is especially apparent following the NATO summit in January 1994. Although Germany has, in many ways, been out front in calling for NATO reform and an expanded program of political outreach to the East, German policy will lack credibility until it is clear that Bonn can and also will assume its share of new missions and responsibili-

ties. Unless Germany overcomes its "culture of reticence," NATO will be unable to retool itself for the new challenges of the post-Cold War era. What is needed to forge a new consensus is political leadership, a clear sense of German national interests and priorities, and a strategy to pursue those interests in conjunction with Germany's allies.

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